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ABSTRACT

Representing a first attempt by English teachers in Scotland to address a professional mandate that they teach and assess the modes of talking and listening, this booklet outlines both the scope and the details of an oral/aural syllabus. The eight chapters in the booklet cover the following areas: (1) the oral syllabus--principles and approaches; (2) an English teaching approach to the oral syllabus; (3) the content and scope of the oral syllabus--purposes, activities, skills, and contexts; (4) methodology for the oral syllabus--the formative assessment approach, the nature of talk, and differences in talking and writing; (5) assessment of the oral syllabus--assessment through criteria, difficulties posed by the special nature of talk, and an oral assessment package; (6) listening--activities, skills, and a teaching model; (7) the teaching and assessment of group talk; and (8) the oral curriculum. Appendixes include a discussion of the syllabus and assessment guidelines, listening criteria related to grade, and a tape transcript of an unsupervised group discussion. (HOD)

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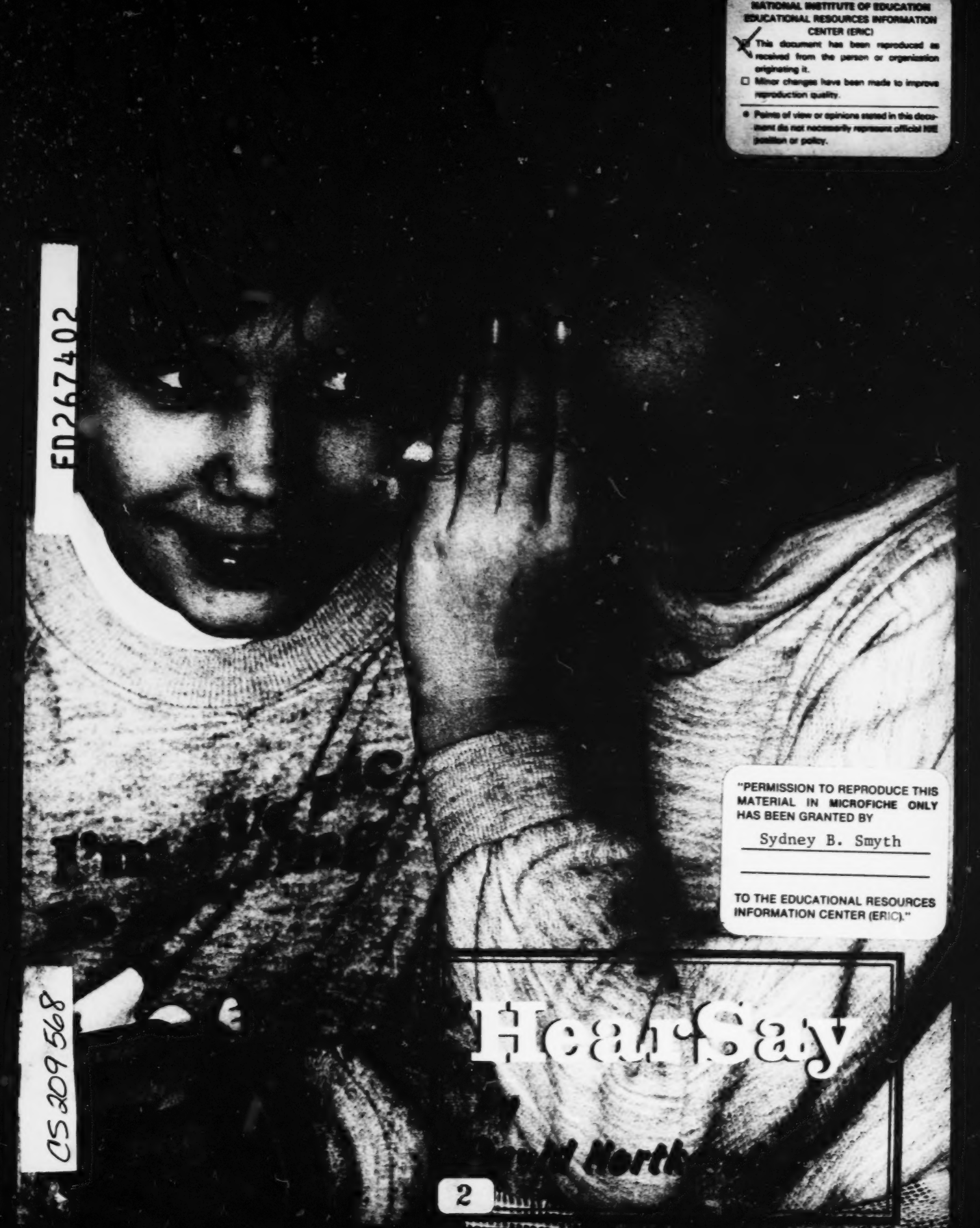

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HEARSAY

by

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with

the Scottish Central Committee on English

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM

This paper is published by the Scottish Curriculum Development Service, Edinburgh Centre, which is part of the structure of the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum.

It is an occasional paper intended for consideration by teachers of English, teachers of Special Education and others concerned with the development of language skills of pupils in Scottish Schools. As a discussion paper, it should not be regarded as a policy document or as representing the views of the C.C.C.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years working groups and committees of teachers of English have tried to come to grips with the task of producing a teachers' vade-mecum on oral and aural skills only to find that the immediate and transitory nature of the activities to which these skills refer makes definition elusive.

Very early in its life, the Fourth Scottish Central Committee on English decided that it too would attempt to furnish teachers of English with a kit which might be of use to them and constituted itself as a working party in pursuit of that end. Part of every meeting of the Committee was devoted to a consideration of the teaching and assessing of Talk and Listening and work on the topic formed the main business of three weekend sessions.

On several occasions over the past two and a half years it seemed that, in spite of the work done by the Committee and of its determination that something of use should be produced, a way of tackling the job of teaching and assessing Talk and Listening skills would once again escape apprehension. The credit that it did not do so belongs to one person. Very fortunately, David Northcroft, Head of the English Department at Aberdeen College of Education, is a member of the Central Committee. From the first committee discussion about oral and aural skills to the writing of this completed paper, Mr. Northcroft's contribution to the enterprise has been seminal and crucial.

Prior to the production of **HearSay** a substantial amount of talking and listening took place at meetings of the Scottish Central Committee on English. Mr. Northcroft took a leading part in these discussions and went on to think long and deeply about what was said and about the exemplar material which had been gathered from schools.

Then he wrote what follows.

John H. Jardine
Chairman
Scottish Central Committee on English

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This publication has been written up by one person, as will be apparent from its tone and standpoint: many — but by no means all — of its observations of classwork, and the particular shape given to some of its arguments, are individual ones. But in a very important sense it is also the product of a group of people professionally involved in English teaching — the members of the Scottish Central Committee on English. I have received much general assistance from the advice, encouragement and practical support of my colleagues on that committee. The help has been of a very specific nature too, since the valuable discussions of Talk and Listening held as a regular feature of our meetings have been supplemented by three productive working weekends in which particular ideas and variously contributed examples have been investigated in a thoroughly collaborative spirit.

But even the most cursory glimpse into its contents will show that **HearSay** would not have been begun, let alone completed, without the most generous and willing help of many individuals, schools, English departments and pupils, who sent in tapes, received visits, joined in discussion and offered much appreciated encouragement. We have tried to make this list of acknowledgements as complete as we can, but however full it may be, it can only give the merest indication of our dependence upon others in compiling this work.

It should also be added that no document written by outsiders can properly account for the particular circumstances and individual teacher-pupil considerations that must attend the original classwork on which it is based. Inevitably, school examples have been taken out of their context and — to some extent — made to serve the needs of a general discussion. We are therefore doubly grateful to schools for allowing us to use their work in this way.

At the same time we must say that our ultimate intention has been to use school work that may constitute examples of good and significant practice: it is very much to be hoped that what has been included in **HearSay** will testify to the excellent pioneering work that has been going on in the schools that have helped us to write it.

PREFACE

Probably the second worst thing that could happen to this document would be for it to become accepted as the definitive statement on The Oral Syllabus for the 1980's. Disclaimers must be made at the outset: what is to be found here is not the expression of expert deliberation, nor is it the outcome of specialised research. Instead it is the collecting together of a series of necessarily occasional observations tentatively organised into an outline commentary by an author and a committee who, in this field, are best described as interested amateurs. **HearSay** has provisional status only: it is a first attempt by English teachers, whose interests in their subject are general ones, to make some sense out of the new demand that is being made upon the profession — that they teach and assess the modes of Talk and Listening.

If there is any danger of this publication acquiring an aura of authority, it will not be because of any intrinsic merit, but because English teachers so urgently need guidance in this area. Indeed it is the over-riding need for somebody to take on the responsibility for saying something about the oral syllabus that persuaded the Central Committee on English which was formed in 1981 to put this topic at the head of its agenda and now, towards the end of its life, to publish its thoughts on the matter. It is inevitable that these will contain much that is half-formulated only, and will be based on parallels and notions that are insecurely conceived of the nature of Talk and Listening, and notions, indeed of English teaching itself, that will one day come to be seen as primitive. But if we are ever to arrive at this later position, then discussion will have to be undertaken **now**, however vulnerable its assumptions prove to be.

The appropriate response to this document will be to treat it as a focus for debate as to the nature of the Talk and Listening Syllabus and, better still, as a stimulus — provocation even — to further practical work, especially of the kind that will augment the somewhat meagre stock of examples of school work to which we are presently limited. Indeed it is not difficult to see where the priorities lie in this respect since there are several obvious ways in which this publication is a victim of our inadequate state of knowledge. One consequence has been a disproportionate emphasis on the kind of talk and listening that might be described as 'solo-to-audience'. It was natural that schools in working out their initial ideas should turn to this, the most manageable and familiar-seeming of all oral formats, and that we should follow the schools in our explanations and samples. The result is that we now need to provide accounts of approaches suitable for the more complex, and perhaps more common, types of spoken language to be found in group and person-to-person interaction. Similarly, there is need to fill out our coverage of examples of methodology in Chapter 4 and to do this by further documented work in such developments as peer evaluation, self assessment, role-play, the exploitation of the media, the potential of speech games, and so on.

Above all — and this point is worth a separate paragraph — English teachers stand in urgent need of thorough-going case-study work which is able to furnish in-depth accounts of oral activities as they have been introduced, taught and assessed in the total context of real classwork with real pupils. It is to be hoped that this central document will be quickly succeeded by reports of local initiatives with titles such as 'Talk and Listening at X Academy' or 'The Oral Syllabus in Y Region'. The recent and splendid Ayr Division's **Listening Skills**'[1] complete with accompanying tape, is a timely and soon to be followed, I hope, example of what is meant here.[2].

There is one other important respect in which **HearSay** is a creature of its time and that is its co-incidence with the Munn and Dunning programme (also referred to as the 14-16 Programme) of Secondary English reform. In writing it up it has seemed useful, inevitable in fact, to use **The Guidelines** as our constant reference-point. Indeed our whole document is really an attempt to work out the implications of the demands contained in that publication for both the universal teaching of Talk and Listening and a guided reform of the English syllabus generally. For this reason, and also because many of our terms and assumptions concerning English teaching are based on those of **The Guidelines,** it might be useful to specify that the edition used here is the 'Joint Working Party Report on English at Foundation, General and Credit Levels' published in May 1983 by the Scottish Examination Board — and also to add that its proposals 'are issued for the purpose of consultation only and are not to be misunderstood as decisions affecting syllabuses and examinations'. For readers not conversant with the Scottish educational scene, we supply an explanatory note on 'Munn and Dunning' in Appendix A.

HearSay is meant to offer help but there is one respect, at least, in which it must appear to be somewhat oppressive — its bulk. Its size will, I hope, be excused as the inevitable consequence of any attempt to outline both the scope and detail of an oral syllabus as well as to consider the arguments that should underpin it. It is certain, however, that the heaviness of this document will also be seen as a vivid indication of the weight of demand that now falls upon the individual English teacher as he struggles to make teaching sense out of the general requirement that he should add Talk and Lstening to his classroom load. While we have tried to mediate between that requirement and those burdens, we are conscious that at times we will have served only to highlight the practical problems involved.

---

1. **Listening Skills: Materials Produced for S3-4 by Division Working Party — English**, 1983.
obtainable from: George Arthur, Adviser in English, Strathclyde Department of Education (Ayr Division), Newton Centre, Green Street Lane, Ayr KA8 8BH.

2. Another recent example is **Outlook** Special Issue "Teaching Talking and Listening".
Highland English Newsletter from John Fyfe, Adviser in English, Highland Region, Education Offices, Kenneth Street, Inverness IV3 5DW.

The oracy movement did not, of course, originate with us or even with Munn and Dunning: both this document and that programme are the children of the desire that schools should spread their English work across the full range of the pupil's personal and social needs, and that they should also seek ways of bringing his language experience, much of which will be oral in medium, into the very heart of the school syllabus. These are general aspirations to which the authors can give their whole-hearted support. At the same time, if we are to serve that cause properly, it will be important for us to state at the very outset that if we, the profession, are really serious about giving our children the kind of oral syllabus they deserve, then we must also be very clear about the kinds of commitment that will be required. Extra resources in the form of time, materials, personnel and the reduction of class sizes are desirable, not just because 'Talk' has now become an extra item on the classroom agenda, but also because its very nature demands such a response. To a greater extent than Reading and Writing, the oral modes are individualist, fugitive and interactional in character and will only be properly taught if our classroom treatment is both flexible in the variety of learning opportunities offered to our pupils and solicitous of their personal development. If those who set our syllabus targets, and are in a position to improve the means by which they can be achieved, do not make a corresponding provision, then there is a danger that the oral syllabus will quickly narrow itself into a sterile routine of aural memory tests and occasional set piece lecturettes, that the teaching of Talk will become practice for 'the talk' and that the developement of Listening will be a hasty coaching up in past examination tapes.

That would be a very great loss — and not just for our pupils. Despite the theoretical uncertainty and the practical problems, despite all our inexperience and the present austerity under which English teachers work, it is important to insist that I — and the Committee on whose behalf I do so — remain convinced of the value of an oral syllabus for all our school children. Enough has already been done, difficult though the circumstances have been, to show that Talk and Listening activity may provide experiences which are not merely satisfying in themselves but which may also enrich the whole English curriculum and vitalise our pupils' experience of it.

David Northcroft
Aberdeen College of Education
January 1984

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORAL SYLLABUS — PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES

SUMMARY OUTLINE

Section 1: The Case for an Oral Syllabus

This chapter looks at some of the fundamental issues surrounding the claim that all Secondary English courses should make a clear commitment to the teaching and assessment of talk and listening skills. In supporting the argument, we concede that while there may be some personal 'conversational' types that may well be left to develop naturally, the term 'speech' covers a wide range of purposes and activities, many of which do have to be learned — reference is made here to the linguist Gillian Brown's distinction between 'listener' and 'message-orientated' talk.

Section 2: Towards an Oral Syllabus: Aspirations

The new demands for an oral syllabus are related to the Munn and Dunning developments and the Guidelines are, therefore, established as a basic reference point for the whole of this document. Thus, if we examine the kind of claims that have been made in the past, such as Wilkinson's ideal of universal 'Oracy', we will discover a close correspondence to the Guidelines proposal that 'growth and competence' should be the essential twin 'aims' of all English work and that these aspirations should be thought of as implying a syllabus which covers the full range of individual and social language needs, including those to be found within the 'talk and listening' modes.

Section 3: Towards an Oral Syllabus: Approaches

We finish with a brief survey of the kind of guidance that English teachers who are making up their own oral syllabus may find in existing approaches. The conclusion, is, however, that while there are useful ideas to be found in sources such as the work of the English Speaking Board, in the analyses of speech usage carried out by linguists and the expertise of Speech and Drama teachers, each one of them is too specialist to serve the practical needs of the English teacher whose syllabus must work for the broad language development of his pupils and be carried out in the circumstances of the ordinary secondary school classroom. This section therefore leaves us with the inescapable conclusion that we can only proceed by trying to establish our own approach — what might be termed an 'English Teaching' one.

1. The Case for an Oral Syllabus

In paragraph 49 of **Half Our Future,** the Newsom Report addresses itself to the problem of the 'inadequate speech' to be found among the majority of secondary school children:

'This matter of communication affects all aspects of social and intellectual growth. There is a gulf between those who have, and the many who have not, sufficient command of words to be able to listen and to discuss rationally; to express ideas and feeling clearly; and even to have any ideas at all. We simply do not know how many people are frustrated in their lives by inability ever to express themselves adequately: or how many never develop intellectually because they lack the words with which to think and to reason . . .'[1]

As well as providing a suitably stirring preface to any paper on oral skills, this impassioned outburst is worth quoting here both as a reminder of how strongly established the claims for their teaching are and of how slow our response to them has been. The Newsom Report came out in 1963 and it is only now, twenty years later and a Bullock Report in between, that the secondary curricular reforms associated with the 14-16 programme have elevated talk and listening to a formal, assessment-worthy position within the general English syllabus.

It would be unfair to say that the past two decades brought no practical response at all to Newsom's urgings: since the 1960's there has been a consistent liberalising of English work with the result that all personal language activity has increasingly become valued, and opportunity has been given to pupils to contribute their own viewpoints and experiences to the work of the class, not only by discussion with the teacher but through talking it over within their own small groups. However, it would also be true to observe that up till now the real stuff of the Syllabus — the bit that gets written out into a proper scheme of work and appears in the end of term examinations — has continued to be reading and writing, and that the effect of the introduction of a certain amount of pupil talk has really been to allow the two oral modes to make useful contributions to creating a supportive context in which the more prestigious literacy events can take place.

The truth is that English teachers have yet to translate the growing importance attached to pupils' speech needs into visible, organised teaching action. Till now we have, perhaps, been able to behave as if pupil progress in these areas would somehow emerge from the general question-and-answer and (if we and they are in good form) discussion routines of day-to-day teaching. But now that the 14-16 Guidelines have appeared with the

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1. **A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England),** HMSO, 1963, p. 15.

demand that talk and listening become formal teaching obligations, we shall no longer be able to hold on to any such comfortable position; nor can we simply react by giving oral and aural work time because the Guidelines argue that **all** our English teaching must be disciplined by assessment requirments. Consequently, our class work in talk and listening must take the form of a syllabus that is sufficiently precise, purposeful and coherently structured to establish clear evidence of work done and progress made.

Doubts about the feasibility, the appropriateness even, of instituting such a programme are bound to persist, however, since it is possible to argue that while the oral modes do indeed play the kind of crucial role in an individual's life that the Newsom Report claims for them, they represent intractably different processes from those involved in literacy and cannot be given the same kind of explicit syllabus treatment. After all, the acts of talking and listening don't really appear to be like reading and writing. Whereas the latter produce tangible, discrete records that can be held up for detailed examination, speech is fugitive, collaborative, entangled with the psychology and the social undercurrents of any one of an infinite number of actual situations. Indeed, many teachers will feel that talk is too idiosyncratic to be taught but is rather something that people do or don't do well according to their temperaments and their capacity to sustain certain forms of personal relationships. Perhaps then talk flourishes best when it is left to grow as an intimate part of pupils' lives and is not converted into an item on the classroom agenda. We have all had the experience of pupils who talk well enough when we don't want them to, but who fall oppressively silent when invited to contribute to a class discussion on some teacher-selected issue. How can we English teachers hope to catch the living flow of individual talk, let alone add to its vitality?

This is a counter-claim that will have to be met by defining the kinds of talk and listening that properly belong to a school syllabus and those that do not. 'Talk' is a composite term that covers a multiplicity of social practices as well as personal experiences and while there will be some, predominantly intimate, speech forms that the pupil will be naturally practised in, there remain many others, including those which are essential to his capacity to act effectively within his community's social life and culture, that can be acquired only as the result of conscious, trained effort.

The linguist Gillian Brown has made a useful distinction here when she refers to 'listener-orientated' as against 'message-orientated' talk.[1] All of us do a lot of our talking in situations where we are simply conversing with a 'listener' partner and, since our interests here are more to do with expressing the sense of personal relationships involved than with any consciously articulated outcome, formal teaching would certainly be inappropriate. But there will still be many other more formal occasions when we need to structure our talk round a specific purpose because we have some particular communication to make, a 'message' that is aimed at ensuring the explicit outcome of a reciprocal action or an acknowledgement of understanding.

The conclusion is that pupils do indeed need to be 'taught' to talk and to listen: while they may well be able to chat with vivid fluency in some situations, such an apparently spontaneous gift will grow unbidden only in certain circumstances, mostly the intimate times of conversation on familiar topics with a small, known circle. But talk as an expression of close bonds with family and friends is something quite different from the ability to make selective use of the full range of spoken language resources in order to establish a coherent position or to fulfil a specific transaction. And here is meant not just those specialised set pieces like debate and the public meeting but also the multitude of everyday occasions where we wish to initiate an action, to query a proposal, to instruct, to explain and to relate an occurrence, all of which require disciplines of question-and-answer, clarity and structure in exposition and the ability to follow established conventions of register. And these are qualitities that can only come from the confident possession of formal, **learned** oral skills.

2. Towards an Oral Syllabus: Aspirations

An important advocate for oral work in British schools has been Andrew Wilkinson. In his pioneering **Spoken English**[2] — a publication which appeared within two years of Newsom — he launched the term 'Oracy' as an expression of his conviction that talk-and-listening should join with Numeracy and Literacy in becoming the new '3Rs', the irreducible core of the secondary curriculum.

As the coinage of Oracy implies, for Wilkinson Spoken English is to be viewed as much more than a course of training in certain useful life-skills: it is an all-embracing concept, an ideal whose fulfilment is fundamental to our sense of what an educated person should be. To be 'inorate' is not simply to be incompetent, it is to be stunted as an individual, to remain repressed within the narrow confines of a half-life of personal misunderstanding, cultural impoverishment and undernourished human relationships. As he roundly declared: 'Speech . . . is a central factor in the development of the personality and closely related to human happiness and well-being'.

The notion of the oral syllabus as a grand ideal that overarches both practical objectives and individual enrichment is echoed in the Bullock Report, **A Language for Life**:

> *'In today's society talk is taking on an ever growing significance. People are surrounded by words which are playing upon issues that will affect their lives in a variety of ways . . . As a consumer, a worker, a voter, a member of his community, each person has pressing reasons for being able to*

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1. 'The Spoken Language' contributed to **Linguistics and the Teacher**, ed. Ron Carter, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.
2. **Educational Review**, Occasional Publications No 2, University of Birmingham, 1965.

evaluate the words of others. He has equally pressing reasons for making his own voice heard. Too many people lack the ability to do either with confidence. Too many are unable to speak articulately in any context which might test their security. The result can be acquiescence, apathy, or a dependence upon entrenched and unexamined prejudices.[1]

In one respect, this reads as a list of specific oral functions that make up an indispensable equipment by which we all have to negotiate the business of day-to-day existence; but the urgent theme that underlines these items is the notion of the individual as a fully developed person, liberated by his command of talk into a power that will enable him to express his own identity, to come to his own understandings, to create his own life.

Wilkinson and Bullock give us our initial aims and do so in the form of a dual purpose: the oral syllabus should attempt to provide a practical training in those tasks where efficient speech and listening act as an instrument by which we get things done, perform certain tasks and acquire specific knowledge; it should also be a living source of personal creativity and enrichment, a way to individual fulfilment.

The oral syllabus should, in the other words of the Guidelines, aim at achieving for the pupil both 'competence' and 'growth'.

3. Towards an Oral Syllabus: Approaches

'Oracy' translated into 'growth' and 'competence' will serve as general statement of commitment to the Oral cause: in seeking guidelines as to how we may convert these aspirations into a substantive syllabus, we shall find that the work of the last twenty years offers us a variety of approaches.

a) The Performance Approach

Perhaps, at secondary school level, the most established procedure for oral skills assessment lies in the work of Christabel Burniston and the English Speaking Board. In an ESB course, candidates will offer themselves for graded examination before a visiting adjudicator, for which occasion they will prepare an oral folio of prescribed items, typically a talk on a self-chosen topic followed by a question-and-answer session, a reading aloud from an approved text and the recitation of a set poem or prose passage.[2]

Undoubtedly the ESB has done valuable service in promoting oral work and can offer a measure of personal achievement to those who participate in it (successfully), but it is difficult not to feel that both its content and its concerns are too specialist for its programme to act as a model for the universal, wide-ranging syllabus we are seeking. Essentially this is because its values are aesthetic, its material preoccupied with the voluntary set piece occasion of public performance where oral proficiency may most dramatically be demonstrated by mastery within the ritualistic format of lecturette, recitation and debate. Consequently its teaching methods are tied to the coaching of the candidate towards stylistic qualities such as 'verbal vitality' and the artful banishment of 'affectation and aggression', a regimen in which exercises designed to promote 'smooth junctions' and to avoid 'glottic shock', and the vocal like, feature prominently.

At its worst the ESB may degenerate into no more than an initiation into a minor social art or a training for future membership of the Toastmasters' Club. But used discriminatingly at the right time, and as a specific contribution to a broader syllabus, its long established work in schools offers a fund of experience upon which we may draw in teaching those aspects of the oral syllabus where a concern with speech as a vocal art and listening as aural appreciation will be relevant.

b) The Linguistic Approach: Socio-linguistics

If the Performance tradition is over-exclusive, a contrary approach is offered by the work of those socio-linguists who, during the last two decades, have been investigating speech as a phenomenon to be described with a value-free interest in all its characteristic manifestations. The Oracy movement which began in the 1960's under Andrew Wilkinson tooks as its starting-point the conviction that an education in one's own language ought to correspond to the actual usages of its native speakers. Classroom work should be founded on a study of real-life speech situations, where oral 'skills' become the ability to adopt the style that tunes into the particular needs of the occasion, as defined by the inter-relationships of the participants and the purpose of their meeting.

Despite the relevance of its concerns, this approach also has severe limitations as a basis for the general school syllabus. The whole orientation of the socio-linguist is towards the scientific rather than the pedagogic, and he seeks primarily to achieve a categorical analysis of how language in society functions. The results are enlightening but hardly the kind of material out of which effective teaching action can be made. Thus the Schools' Council Oracy Project (1967-72) under Wilkinson has done good work in introducing us to the range of oral usages that should be included in the content of our syllabus, but accompanies its studies with a series of teaching suggestions that are a reflection of the analytical interests that instigated them rather than the practical needs of the school children to whom they are being offered. While there might well be a general educational case for introducing pupils to notions of social speech 'register' and for giving them some awareness of how speech is shaped by the determinants of 'audience', 'appropriateness' to purpose and 'formality' of intra-personal relationship, these matters quickly refine themselves into an overtechnical absorption with the

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1. **A Language for Life**, HMSO, 1975, para 10.30 p. 156.
2. See **What is Spoken English?: Can It Be Examined in General Teaching?**: English Speaking Board, Liverpool.

niceties of paralinguistic expression, the role of the proxemic in reciprocal speech situations and the like. And even if this temptation is resisted, the assumption that being able to recognise the function, of, say, 'stabilisers' in spontaneous speech will actually improve its quality, that knowledge about the phenomenon of talk directly improves its practice, remains a dubious one. Such matters belong to the field of language study or, more fashionably, 'awareness' and should not become leading features of a general syllabus whose priority must be the improvement of the pupil's expressive capacity and his involvement in rich oral experiences.

The real benefit of the socio-linguistic approach has been in the informative value that it has had for English teachers rather than their pupils; not only because of the syllabus content it has suggested to us, but also because of its power to disabuse us of the various prejudices and inhibiting misapprehensions we are all likely to be victims of where 'good' speech, dialect and accents are concerned. By demonstrating the interactive nature of talk, and by showing how it is rooted in social actualities, Wilkinson and his colleagues have helped us to approach our pupils' speech in a more productive and relaxed manner, feeling no longer obliged to subject it to inappropriate criteria derived from the exactness and discipline of writing or the tyranny of Received Pronunciation, and some imagined purity of accent. By focusing on linguistic rather than social class values, they have freed us to get on with the task of improving our pupils' speech by building up on what is already there so as to extend its range and versatility, rather than by seeking to repress what has proved to be communicatively adequate within its own existing field of expression.

c) The Linguistic Approach: Psycho-linguistics

As well as investigating speech as a social activity, linguists have also taken an interest in the individual's development of his power of speech in relationship to his personal understanding of himself and of the outside world. Only recently in Scotland, however, has there been any specific research into the ways in which knowledge about speech acquisition may be turned into a course of directed teaching. The SED-funded project 'Competence in Spoken English', directed by Gillian Brown, is currently attempting to define the perceptual factors involved in the speaker's and listener's attempts to negotiate mutually meaningful communication. Here it is suggested that a key to effective oral expression might lie in extending the speaker's awareness of the different perspective of the listener — of his need, for example, to receive an explicit definition of the topic and a clear view of his relationship to it. If this is so, it may well be possible to work out a teaching programme which takes the pupil through a sequence of oral tasks — such as 'information exchanging' — that develops his empathic powers in this respect.

While there is every hope that this work will yield valuable insights into the processes involved in speech communication and thus help English teachers design appropriate formative assessment methods for their development, there is still some way to go. And in any case, the problems of designing general classwork out of an approach that focuses so intensively upon the nature of individual speech relationships, are likely to be formidable.

d) The Speech and Drama Approach

If, as the linguists' approach indicates, speech may be viewed as the acting out of a repertoire of the roles that we take up as we move from register to register, each attended by its own particular listener audience, then one obvious way of extending expertise will be through improvised drama. The Speech and Drama specialist may well be able to show us improvisation routines that are specially designed to rehearse the various communication parts assigned to us by our communal life. Role-play may also possess considerable psychological benefits in that it could free shy pupils from their inhibitions and help the habitually inexplicit 'to see' more clearly where the sources of effective communication lie, as they are forced to think their way into specific speech situations.

However, it is also clear that this approach is open to the same kind of suspicions as is the Performance tradition, in that it too may impose what are really artistic values upon our teaching, qualities which, though valid in themselves, belong to the ends of oratory — or in this case studio drama. Pupils who, for example, are called upon to practise clarity of explanation by assuming the role of a 'helpful neighbour' or 'the man at the bus stop' may get caught up in the distracting demands of authenticity of imitation, complete with life-like stammers and gossipy digression and other features of what is actually **poor** communication. And there remains, in any case, the whole undecided cognitive issue of whether there really is an easy transfer of learning, from what must be the artificiality of a closed simulation exercise to the complexity and uncertainty of actual living.

The Speech and Drama approach can only be seen as assisting our pupils to go through a particular stage in their learning; it cannot in itself make up an oral syllabus, but only act as an available method within it.

e) A Language Across the Curriculum Approach

Since the 1960's writers like James Britton and Douglas Barnes have stressed the central importance of talk, especially of personal, informal talk, as a powerful means of generating learning within the individual. By encouraging the pupil to put new ideas into his own works and to talk them over freely with others, we enable him to make those new ideas his own, they claim. These writers have also pointed to the gap that lies between the pupils' own natural speech and the organised, precise forms characteristic of the question-and-answer and up-on-your-feet-and-explain sessions demanded by the average secondary classroom, an insistence which may oppress them into an alienated silence.

From this viewpoint, the way to develop talk will be to embark on a concerted curriculum effort to give pupils continual opportunity to contribute their own speech to the learning process, and to do so with fellow pupils in groups as well as with their teacher. Consequently, the central teaching concerns here will be the need to help the pupil to acquire habits of questioning and to develop his ability to explore new ideas verbally, to

collaborate with others in group discussion and, in every way possible, to encourage him to maintain a personal dialogue with his school subjects and with those who teach them.

Essentially, this is an approach that is concerned with the curriculum as a whole; hence the term associated with it, 'Language Across the Curriculum'. Barnes, Britton, and the rest, are really intent on reforming the language life of the entire school, as a necessary precondition to all learning in it. They are not engaged in constructing a specific oral syllabus within the English classroom.

Nevertheless, the English teacher does have a special responsibility for pupils' general language development: furthermore his own efforts to teach particular talk skills may well be dependent upon whether the surrounding curriculum, including what goes on elsewhere in his own teaching, provides a supportive oral environment or not. Consequently the perspectives provided by the Language Across the Curriculum movement must always be kept before us, if not as a means of structuring the oral syllabus, certainly as a reminder of the need to utilise all the language resources of our own classroom, and of the school beyond, in order to create the conditions in which it may flourish.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Despite all the useful work that has been carried out in the field, it has to be concluded that there does not yet appear to be any ready-made strategy or programme of activity that the secondary teacher can adopt to guide him in his efforts in designing a talk and listening input for his standard English courses. This is not to say that the approaches surveyed in this Chapter do not have something to offer, either in contributing to our general understanding of the nature of speech (the 'Linguistic'), or in suggesting to us particular techniques (role-play in 'Speech and Drama', assessment methods in 'Performance').

Rather the argument must be that, neither singly nor taken together, do they give us the kind of **classroom** advice that the English teacher, who has to minister through integrated language and literature courses to the general language needs of all his pupils, is easily able to follow. This is inevitable since the starting-points are different: the English Speaking Board, the Oracy Project, socio-and psycho-linguists all research and write from a particular interest, and, although the bias given to that interest may differ, each regards 'talk' and 'listening' as special — whether it be as art form, social phenomenon, perceptual process, or expressive technique.

The result is a set of approaches and programmes that are too narrow in themselves or too detached from the full set of English syllabus concerns either to stand for the range of skills and experience that must make up a universal secondary English course or to contain the classroom strategies by which they must be taught. It is for this reason that we must in our next chapter attempt to create our own non-specialist approach to the matter.

NOTE:

This has necessarily been a very brief survey of what is a large and interesting field. It will also suffer from the fact that it has been written in the autumn of 1983 and is therefore unable to take into account the very newest developments. An important example of these limitations will, I am sure, prove to be the short notice given to what I have termed the 'Psycho-linguist' approach. As it happens the Competence in Spoken English Project referred to will soon be publishing its results in book form and will obviously make an important contribution to English teachers' work.[1]

1. George Yule, Anne Anderson, Gillian Brown, Richard Shillcock, **Teaching Talk**, Department of Linguistics, University of Edinburgh. (forthcoming).

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORAL SYLLABUS — AN ENGLISH TEACHING APPROACH

SUMMARY OUTLINE

Section 1: Oral Skills as Part of the English Course

The 'English Teaching Approach' is an attempt to act upon the conclusion of the previous chapter that what English teachers require at the present time is a practical strategy that will help them to manage Talk and Listening, not as specialist topics but as part of the general language development of all their pupils. Clearly these interests will best be served by defining procedures in straightforward, economical terms and so this chapter offers an approach that focuses on what the basic patterns of Oral Skills as a **teaching** procedure may be.

The result is the working out of a model classroom process, and its presentation as the flow chart that appears in Section 2. Those readers wanting a quick resumé of the argument of this chapter are advised to turn to those pages on which the teaching diagrams are set out. This section is, however, prefaced by the argument that is to be found in the first part of this chapter, namely that English teachers should, most productively, seek an Oral approach that is grounded on general English teaching principles as set out in the Guidelines rather than on any specialist considerations; that they could, for example, with profit, seek parallels in the existing methods for handling reading and writing. Thus Listening could adapt techniques used in the classroom treatment of Reading since they both involve interpretative processes while the pattern for Talk could be found in the other expressive mode of Writing.

(a) (b) (c): **Content, Methodology, Assessment**

These starter suggestions are then worked out in more detailed syllabus terms using the Guidelines for our points of reference with the simple analytical procedure of dividing issues into the three teaching stages of content-methodology-assessment. Talk may thus be seen as a form of drafting process and Listening as a form of interpretation-learning while both, like any of the language modes, may fall into a teaching pattern derived from the basic assumptions of 'content' as the practising of a range of communication tasks set by language use purposes; of 'method' as the shaping of performance through formative assessment techniques employed within unit contexts; and 'assessment' as the setting of pupil work against criteria derived from the nature of the communication task itself.

2: A Teaching Model

3: Application and Example

These points are organised into the algorithmic presentations of Section 2, after which comes a detailed application to the example of a 'Foundation' pupil learning to deliver a talk on a self-chosen topic to a classroom audience,

Tape Extracts referred to: Number 1.

NOTE: In this chapter the decision is made to simplify subsequent treatment of Oral Skills by dealing with Talk (Chapters 3, 4, 5) and Listening (Chapter 6) as separate items.

1. Oral Skills as Part of the English Course

An enthusiasm for improvised drama, an interest in oral linguistics, a commitment to raising standards of speech performance — each offers some insight into the nature of Spoken English as a school subject. It is worth reiterating, however, that what we are looking for is not an approach that will give due classroom recognition to speech and to listening as significant concerns in their own right, but a strategy that will enable us to handle them as integral parts of the general English syllabus, where such skills will be worth teaching because of their ability to make a contribution to the broad language development of all of our pupils.

This means that in reviewing existing schemes for oral work we must be sufficiently catholic to serve the interests of an oral course that should contain a wide range of skills and experiences if it is to promote both 'competence and growth' in our pupils, and thus express the inclusive spirit of Wilkinson's concept of Oracy. It will only be by treating the various approaches outlined in the previous chapter as a common pool of activities and teaching pointers, that this can be achieved.

But our syllabus must not only be wide-ranging, must not only be relevant, it must also — and this most crucially — be teachable. And teachable within the context of the basic secondary English curriculum. In this respect, the fund of experience made available to us by the work of the ESB, the programmes outlined by the Schools' Council Oracy Project and the improvisation sessions of the Speech and Drama expert will only be of limited usefulness. The real problem for us is that each of these interests starts from a specialist position and argues a case for oral English as a new subject, a case which is not only partisan but which implies the corresponding development of new techniques of pupil management and assessment. What we must look for is an approach that will enable teachers to serve the needs of the English syllabus as a whole rather than promote the cause

of Talk-and-Listening alone. In seeking this, it may be more productive to turn to existing classroom practice and to see how far we can relate oral work to basic English teaching methodology.

Indeed, since the body of expert writing on Speech and Listening does not appear to offer a ready-made model for our school-teaching, it may be that the approach we are likely to find most immediately effective will be the robustly pragmatic one that seeks to utilise what works best in the rest of our English work. Certainly, in setting up a general secondary course, there is a limit to which English teachers can allow themselves to be fussed by issues derived from the esoteric interests of socio-linguists or speech and drama performance; nor indeed should we become overawed by any assumption of unique qualities that may be attributed to the common language acts of talking and listening. All aspects of native language teaching pose problems and it is quite possible that the oral skills only appear to be 'difficult' because there is as yet no established tradition for their class treatment. If so, then it will be from the now well rehearsed procedures for the development of Reading and Writing, recently redefined in the Guidelines, that we have most to learn.

Let us, then, at this stage, assume that Oral Skills are not really all that different from the other two language modes, **at least for teaching purposes**; that they are just as susceptible to the kind of analytical approach to English syllabus construction delineated in the Guidelines as Reading and Writing are — if **they** can be broken down into a manageable programme of language purposes, developmental activities and assessment products, then so can our efforts in Talk and Listening be given a similar clarity and sense of direction.

With that behind us, let us see how far a straightforward procedural analysis — in the manner of the Guidelines — will take us in working out a teaching strategy. To do this, I propose a simple division of Oral Skills into the three fundamental syllabus questions of: what should be taught? how should it be taught? how can we assess that it has been taught? In each case I shall look for direction in the parallels that exist between the oral modes and the rest of the English syllabus.

(a) **Syllabus Content — What do we teach?**

The contemporary English syllabus, as proclaimed in the opening paragraphs of the Guidelines, seeks to meet the needs of the pupil, both as an individual and as a member of his community; it will best accomplish this, it is argued, by involving him in a rich and balanced provision of language and literature experiences. A preliminary step in working towards this, is to divide 'language' into its four modes of Talk, Writing, Listening and Reading, to ensure that each is given its due share of syllabus attention.

While this means that the oral skills will now take their proper place in our classwork, it also implies that Talk and Listening must, like the other two modes, serve the language 'needs' of the pupil, needs which are to be defined by examining the purposes for which he uses language in his actual living. Just as the individual reads a text in order, for example, 'to obtain particular information', so he may listen to another's words for the same purpose, or talk to someone, as well as write to him in order 'to convey' it.

The question, 'what do we teach?' may thus be answered by drawing up a definitive list of such Talk and Listening purposes which may then act as a checklist by which to guide our choice of specific classwork in these areas. A satisfactory oral syllabus will be the one that succeeds in offering a balanced and comprehensive sample or oral activities — or purpose-fulfilling 'tasks' — so that pupils may gain skill and experience in each of the basic oral needs.

(b) **Methodology — How do we teach it?**

Being, like all language modes, based on the individual's personal and social needs, oral skills at school level are best developed by setting up working contexts or 'units' where the pupil will become involved in using them as part of the language resources with which he will explore or respond to some general demand, theme, experience. Talk and Listening simply join Reading and Writing as natural and integral elements in any unit of English work.

Within the unit, teaching approaches may be based on the same developmental approach widely current in reading and (especially) writing work, an approach that forms the Guidelines explanation of the essential 'Process of Teaching'. There seems no reason why Talk — since they are both expressive modes — should not follow the work that has been developed in Writing, where a formative assessment strategy employing drafting is now widely used, and even more widely recommended.

Listening, however, is essentially interpretative in character so that its teaching may be patterned on that of Reading. Thus the 'message' to be listened to can be likened to the text concerning which the teacher will ask questions so as to direct the pupil's attention towards those aspects of content and language use that must be understood in order to establish a basis for making an effective response to it.

(c) **Assessment — How do we discover whether it has been taught?**

The notion of language as a set of outcomes derived from attempts to meet purposes (content) which are progressively worked at by the pupil, with teacher guidance (methodology) means that the syllabus may be treated as a series of tasks, each of which can be made to yield the simple criterion of 'did he do it?' Pupil 'success' in any specific activity will be gained by his demonstration of his mastery over the task represented by it, a value that applies equally to the oral and the literacy modes: can he talk (or write) clearly and effectively enough to communicate 'information'?; did he listen (or read) with sufficient sensitivity 'to grasp implied ideas or feelings'? — and so on.

Authoritative lists of such criteria may be drawn up to act as a reference against which the individual effort can be set — a procedure that will not only achieve reliability in marking but will, if the grades descriptions are detailed enough to contain comparisons between various levels of both talk and performance, also permit a scaling up and down of the basic 'pass' or 'fail' grade. If, say, the pupil communicates a particularly complex piece of information with special cogency and to a large, 'distant' audience — perhaps in the form of a talk — then he may be said to have met more demanding criteria within the 'information purpose' category of oral usage than the pupil who has simply shown his ability to pass on a simple message from one person to another. The latter might well constitute a base performance, the former an advanced one. The feasibility of drawing up agreed assessment descriptions has been at least partially demonstrated by the present Grade Related Criteria that appear in the Guidelines.

Whether the pupil 'passes' the course as a whole or not may further be judged by reviewing his task performances over a battery of representative oral and aural activities. Assessment can thus be organised so as to fit into the kind of 'profile' approach now commonly advocated in reading and writing — and as the 'profile' is an attempt to build up a full and rounded portrait of the pupil which is derived from both informal and formal means, and from general course-work as well as end-of-term examination, many of the apparent assessment difficulties posed by the fugitive nature of oral work should be negotiable. In any case, any formal summative evaluation can only sample one or two items drawn from the total range of significant course activities, and there should be no real problem in devising a revealingly demanding example of oral work for the candidate's final examination. In Writing, this need has been served traditionally by the essay and in Reading by the interpretation passage; the talk or interview on a set topic, and a collection of questions on a taped 'message' may provide suitable oral equivalents.

2: A Teaching Model

So far, the case for approaching oral skills as simply another and equally teachable form of language usage has been worked out as a rather loose series of observations and parallels. It is quite possible, however, to rationalise these separate points by treating them as a set of related propositions which may be shaped into a coherent teaching strategy. The diagrams and written commentary that follow are an attempt to do this.

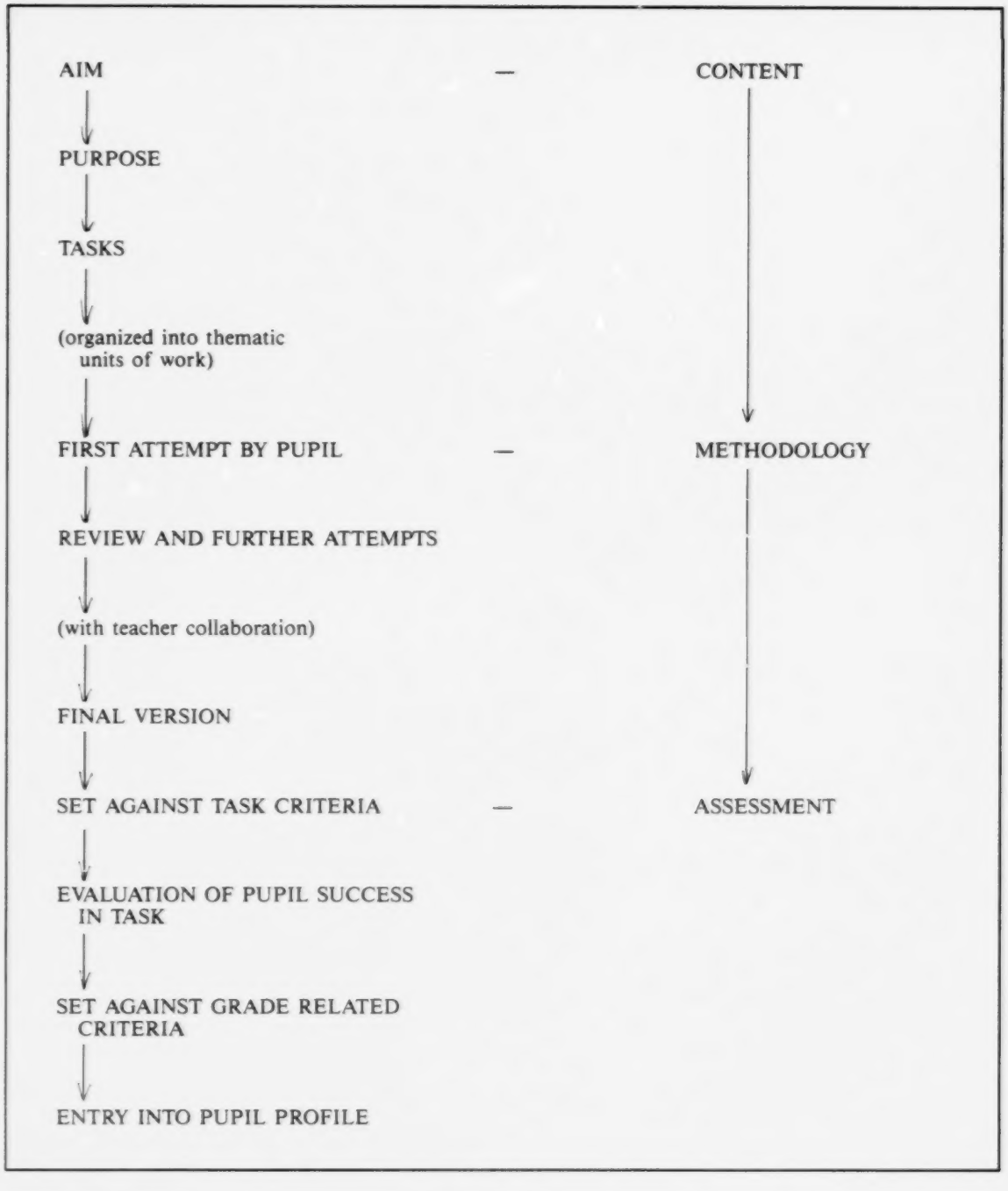
Using the Guidelines as our definitive statement of current practice, the initial move towards a teaching model has already been taken by our identification and grouping together of the various proposals scattered throughout their tables and paragraphs under the three basic heads of Content, Methodology and Assessment. The next step is to simplify these suggestions into a manageable set of major themes which can, while recognising a degree of overlap between them, then be presented in headline form as in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1.

WHAT TO TEACH — SYLLABUS CONTENT		
Balance and Range	:	'competence and growth'
Learning through Situational Demands	:	'language purposes or encounters'
HOW TO TEACH IT — METHODOLOGY		
Language Situations in Contexts	:	'units'
Learning through Successive Attempts	:	'formative assessment'
HOW TO ASSESS IT — ASSESSMENT		
Evaluation against the Subject, not other Pupils	:	'criterion referencing'
Evaluation as a Package of Pupil Information	:	'profiles'

Once set out in this way, we can see how the various paragraph entries of the Guidelines begin to shape up into a teaching pattern. In themselves the three basic headings can be viewed as successive stages in syllabus planning, the entries below them as steps in their implementation. This underlying logic may be realised in the form of the flow diagram that appears as Figure 2:

Figure 2.



3. Application and Example

A general English teaching model has now emerged whose applicability to oral skills may be both illustrated and tested by using an example of teaching in a secondary class. If you listen to the first example that appears on the accompanying tape **(Tape Extract No. 1)** you will hear Willie, a member of a third year 'Foundation' set in a Fife school, delivering a short talk on the subject chosen by himself, 'Looking after Rabbits'.

Both the format and the nature of the topic make this a familiar enough example of classroom oral work, but the pupil in question, one of moderate to below average ability, the kind who in pre-Munn and Dunning days would be doomed to leave school with no explicit recognition of any academic achievement, has, I think, performed his task with a clarity, stamina and sense of purposeful involvement that testifies to the strength of the teaching that lies behind it as well as to his own efforts. By setting out the classroom activity that surrounds his appearance before the tape-recorder in the linear form of Figure 2, we shall be able to appreciate the extent to which our model is able to act both as a cogent planning procedure and as a checklist capable of heightening both teacher and pupil perception of what has to be achieved. This we do in Figure 3:

Figure 3

AIM	—	Competence in Talk
PURPOSE	—	Talking to convey information, to share experience
TASK	—	Pupil, solo to audience, talk
(part of Animals Unit)	—	Short talk to class on 'Looking after Rabbits'
FIRST ATTEMPT BY PUPIL	—	Discussion of content and presentation; notes drawn up; first try out, taped; playback,
REVIEW AND FURTHER ATTEMPTS (with teacher collaboration)	—	further discussion of skills demanded; need for 'organisation', 'clarity', 'impact', 'delivery' established.
FINAL VERSION	—	Formal talk to class, committed to tape.
ASSESS	—	Initial verdict: did he do what he set out to? (convey information; share experience)?
		Assess against skills (criteria) established above: did it make sense? was it audible, interesting?; well illustrated with example?; lively? — etc.
SET AGAINST GRADE RELATED CRITERIA	—	Consult Guidelines GRC
ENTRY INTO PUPIL PROFILE	—	Record Grade ('4'/'5'?) against appropriate section on Profile grid.

The decision to ask Willie to deliver a brief solo talk to his class audience represents sound (!) syllabus activity because it corresponds to one of the overall **aims** of the English course in that it clearly demands skills of material organisation and delivery that will develop a basic oral 'competence'. Indeed, one could argue that the confidence and satisfying sense of achievement to be derived from it will also contribute to the pupil's 'growth'. These rather generalised intentions are given substance by being treated as **purposes** that can be identified among the basic lists set out in the Guidelines: this is an example of speech made in order 'to convey information' and 'to describe personal experiences'. The talk can thus be presented to the pupil as a **task** in which he perceives that he has to organise his material and refine his performance so as to achieve these ends.

The shaping of his talk into a clear pupil task provides the basis for the learning of new oral skills and the further development of existing ones. The task naturally carries with it certain demands that can be identified, discussed, exemplified, and rehearsed, a process in which both the teacher, the pupil himself and his classmates can take part. Willie is led to decide on just how much his less knowledgeable audience needs to be told about buying, housing and looking after rabbits and so on, and also the amount of interesting anecdote and description that he can draw upon in order to give his talk its necessary sense of personal involvement. Thus he has come to the decision to sketch in, very quickly, as the start of a simple factual account some basic data about where

to get rabbits, how to feed and house them, and then to describe his experiences of rabbit birth in more vivid detail in the form of an arresting anecdote of early morning discovery.

Teacher observation and analysis, self-criticism, and the responses of other pupils, can all be facilitated by the use of the tape-recorder. This sequence of **attempts, review** and **teacher collaboration,** of learning by doing, shows how oral skills may, like writing and its draft stages, be treated in a formative assessment manner. It also leads on to assessment since the teaching stage will have clarified the necessary skills that an effective talk on a personal topic will entail. Similarly, the last taping might be seen as the **final version** which should embody all these skills and which may act as evidence of what progress the pupil has made.

In **assessment** terms, the overall impression made by this evidence is that we can safely say that, in a basic sense at least, Willie has done the job he set out to do, of telling his audience some straightforward details about rabbit-keeping and of conveying some of the interesting memories the experience has given him. This is not to deny the weaknesses revealed: the talk is certainly orderly but is too much tied to a rudimentary narrative in which one thing (usually more rabbits!) just seems to occur after another, and in which the speaker is too confined to the circumstances of events to highlight what is really dramatic, or to offer us any general conclusions about, say, the value of rabbits as pets. Furthermore, the talk lacks polish and is delivered with too much tentativeness and monotony to suggest a real command over the medium.

The conclusion must be that Willie's talk is basically successful, is an honest, but ultimately limited effort. Although we can offer him a 'pass', we shall need to convert that judgment into some form of comparative grading in order to arrive at an assessment that expresses our mixture of appreciation and reservation about the general quality of his talk. As in the assessment of written language work, a finer calibration can be achieved by consulting the kind of detailed descriptions of performance levels set out in some previously agreed marking scheme, a function that can now be filled by the **Grade Related Criteria**[1], and also, of course, by referring to the detailed skills identified by teacher and pupil working together during the earlier formative stage in the teaching sequence.

If we invoke the criteria set out in the GRC we can, I think, work towards an acceptable grade. We should, for instance, be able to agree that the talk betrayed some 'hesitancy' but did develop its own momentum, that it had none of the 'gap-filling' and 'repetition' that might 'hinder communication'. Similarly we could observe that information was presented in an 'orderly squence' but that no attempt was made to 'highlight' more 'significant' aspects; that, while the talk lacked the shape and sense of climax to create real 'impact', it did have some vivid moments, and that the account of the birth discovery showed some feeling for drama and 'audience awareness'. The conclusion we might thus reach could be expressed by saying that Willie did 'convey information' and 'share experience', did stick to his task of accomplishing those purposes with a tidiness of presentation and clarity of intention that deserve to lift his 'pass' a little above the base-line qualities laid down in the description of Grade 6. Grade 5 would, therefore, appear to be the appropriate mark — although a case might well be made for a Grade 4. Clearly, we need more experience in the form of "agreement trials" before we can use the Grade Related Criteria at this stage with any final assurance.

It would, in fact, be unwise to make the above operation seem too comfortable a procedure for we still have to build up much more experience in oral assessment. There is still much work to be done: examplars of the various performance levels are required, the descriptions themselves must be further refined, and agreement trials held to work out their effective application. But at least there is promise here that we have a clear line of action that will cut through the major inhibitions we may have about offering assessment in the new territory of oral work. In this sense, our 'English teaching model' has served us well. By attempting to describe progress in English as a matter of learning to accomplish a range of separable tasks, each one of which is representative of some major purpose for which we use language in our personal and social lives, we have arrived at a position that has enabled us to achieve 'assessment' as an observation of an actual task performance. Any pursuit of the sophisticated test that will enable general English teachers to invoke national qualities of some general oral excellence, is thus rendered unnecessary. We simply need to work at a real-life problem with the pupil and then, at the end, to step aside in order to watch and listen to the final, unaided result.

However, this does mean that we may treat the present case as only one piece of evidence and that Willie will have to be involved in other oral tasks to complete the account of what he has learned to do. Perhaps he could subsequently be asked to tackle a task that demands powers of explanation or argument ('How to set about choosing an animal'; 'Why I think rabbits make good pets'). And if these tasks are satisfactorily done perhaps he could then be encouraged to attempt them in more demanding contexts or at a more complex level (conduct a question and answer session on pet care; debate the case against vivisection). For the moment, we can enter into the appropriate column of his gridded record sheet that this particular pupil has demonstrated an ability to prepare and deliver a short, informative talk on a familiar, self-chosen topic to an audience of his fellows, and to do so with a fair level of competence. During the rest of the session evidence of proficiency in other talk areas will accrue as the opportunities for their teaching and performance arise; results can be collected on the sheet and so permit a rounded **profile** of ability in oral skills, to be built up gradually.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

What we have attempted to do in this chapter is to work out an approach that will help us to mark out the whole new region of 'Oracy' into manageable areas of classroom action. This has been done, first of all, by

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1. As set out in the Guidelines: reproduced in this document as Appendix B.

clearing the ground of any theoretical or general considerations surrounding the concepts of talk and listening which might impede progress. Further steps were made by turning, instead, to the guidance given by those teaching practices that already existed within the subject.

In part, what follows in the rest of this Paper is an attempt to use that 'English teaching model' as a way of mapping out the oral syllabus in more detail. This will be done by surveying those examples of school work we have been able to gether together at this early stage in Oral Skills teaching, and to do so through the convenient stages, already used, of 'Content', 'Methodology' and 'Assessment'. Since Talk and Listening are different activities in so far as one is expressive (productive) while the other is interpretative (receptive) it will be appropriate to keep treatment of them separate in working out the implications of this chapter. What follows in the next three chapters should therefore be seen as concentrating on Talk. Chapter 6 on Listening will give the opportunity to make a specific application of our approach to that mode.

However, it will be important to keep before us the admission that the approach outlined in this chapter is very much a deliberate simplification of what remains a complex and elusive area. One result of this is the degree to which we focus on solo to audience talk as the most immediately available format. Although Chapter 7 and the 'School Experience' section of Chapter 3 attempt to redress this balance, it is obvious that English teachers require more case-study accounts of work in these areas. Furthermore, it must be remembered that our progress has rested upon an assumption that Talk and Listening sufficiently resemble Reading and Writing to be taught in a like fashion. I shall in the rest of this work, therefore, in some ways be testing out a thesis. The 'English Teaching' approach will, in short, be a valuable reference point in making our attempts to discover the kind of teaching enterprise an oral syllabus might be, to establish what it has in common with the rest of the English Syllabus — but also, perhaps, how it is different.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONTENT AND SCOPE OF THE ORAL SYLLABUS

SUMMARY OUTLINE

1. Talk Purposes and Beyond

The key notion in the Guidelines' definition of syllabus is that of language 'purposes' and the claim that any verbal production may be regarded as the attempt to fulfil some communication task. Chapter 3 therefore attempts to build up its account of content by using the kind of purposes checklist to be found in the Guidelines as its basis.

2. Other Ways of Looking at Talk: Activities, Contexts, Skills

Firstly, however, we have to realise just how skeletal is this reduction of oral usage down to a handful of basic communication purposes. To construct an actual course we shall also have to consider how other ways of looking at Talk might provide the necessary supplementation. We therefore discuss the value of thinking of Talk as an aggregate of relevant 'activities' (eg interviews, telephoning), as a series of situational demands or 'contexts' (here a basic three-fold simplification into solo-audience, one-to-one and group is proposed) and as an embodiment of general 'skills' (such as fluency, delivery, clarity). While each of these attributes has the limitation of being less penetrating an analysis than that provided by the concept of 'purposes' which remains the core, they do combine to give us a useful store of suggestions by which we may flesh out our oral syllabus.

3. Examples

This consists of descriptions of specific activities, contexts and skills teaching used by some schools in their own talk syllabuses.

4. Purposes, Activities, Skills and Contexts — A Comprehensive List

In Section 4 therefore I offer a synthesis of the underlying principles by which selection of actual classroom content may be made in which 'purposes' become the starting point for a progressive mediation through 'activities', 'contexts' and 'skills' towards actual classwork examples. This is presented in the form of an 'Oral Syllabus Guideline' which is to be regarded as the conclusive statement of this chapter's treatment of content.

5. School Experience

Lastly, there is appended a section in which two examples are given of the ways in which schools integrate — as they must — oral work into their English Syllabuses, first, as part of their units design, and then as a varied, wide-ranging activity to be incorporated into a whole session's work through the deployment of a diversity of units.

1. TALK PURPOSES AND BEYOND

In the previous chapter we listened to an example of a pupil developing his ability to use talk in order 'to convey information' and 'to share experience'. The most straightforward way to develop such an event into a full oral syllabus would be to identify the other major purposes for which Willie, or any other member of the community, needs to use talk, and then to devise further suitable classroom activities by which to practise them. To do this would, in fact, be no more than to implement the Guidelines where, conveniently enough, an authoritative list of all-embracing Talk purposes has already been refined for our use:

to convey information
to deploy ideas, expound, argue, evaluate
to describe personal experience, express feelings and reactions
to create particular effects
to work, in a group, towards a common goal.

Nor is it difficult, on paper at least, to devise a corresponding set of classroom activities, within a unit on, to pursue an example, 'Animals':

to deliver a three minute illustrated talk on how to choose and look after a puppy

to propose the motion in a class debate on the rights and wrongs of vivisection

to be interviewed by teacher or classmate on rabbit-keeping

to take part in an improvised scene between a pet shop assistant and a customer wishing to purchase a talking (not dead!) parrot

to chair a group investigating factory farming, and then to report back its findings to the rest of the class.

Obviously, neither Willie himself, nor any other single pupil, could sample all of these activities within the teaching span of one unit, but if this kind of five-fold provision could be repeated as a regular element in the rest of the year's work there would seem to be no logistical reason why he should not gradually gain experience

in all of the talk purposes, and thus be said to have received the kind of balanced and wide-ranging syllabus implied by our overall aims of 'growth and competence'. It would, however, be over-simple to leave the matter of syllabus content at that level since a list of bare purposes can only act as the briefest of notations for an activity which is so variously orchestrated and so synthesised with the experience of our personal thinking, living and social relationships as talk is. Many other factors will have to be taken into account in addition to our neat little quintet of purposes, in order to enrich the Guidelines' summary of oral work. Certainly, individual schools appear to feel a need to express their syllabus intentions in a more multi-dimensional form. Here, for example, is a typical school's statement of its oral 'aims and objectives' for its S3 and S4 (CSE) course:

the ability to use spoken language economically and effectively;

the ability to use it to express thoughts, feelings, opinions and interests in an acceptable way;

the ability to use features of language such as inflexions, stress, intonation, in an acceptable way;

the ability to use registers of spoken language appropriate to specific situations;

to be able to give directions or instructions for a talk in formal situations; eg to an audience or to a stranger;

to be able to tell a story based on personal experience;

to show skill in adopting a given role, eg mock trial, a road accident etc.;

to be able to address an audience on a topic of personal interest;

to behave effectively and appropriately in a job interview;

to present facts to support or refute a point of view;

to present information in the form of an oral summary;

to recount events with personal evaluation;

to use the telephone skilfully and courteously;

to be able to work with others in group situations, such as discussion, committee work, planning out projects.

Certainly each of the five Guidelines purposes is represented somewhere here and a dominant theme throughout is the desire to define pupil talk as an applied skill, to be developed by rehearsing its implementation in specific acts of communication. But it is at this point that we can see emerging another way of looking at the school oral programme and that is as a concentration on particular **types of activities,** most particularly on those which are felt to be most immediately relevant to the life circumstances of the secondary pupil — job interviews, telephoning, reporting a road accident.

Another complication arises from including within this description of oral aims some reference to the forces at work within actual talk situations: *to be able to talk to a stranger, to cope with formal occasions, to address an audience.* These instances bring into focus all kinds of situational factors such as size of audience, relationship of speaker to listener, familiarity of speaker with topic, degree of formality underlying a telephone call to a stranger as opposed to a friend and so on. All these considerations make up what might be termed **the context** of the speech activity and will also have to enter into our oral thinking.

In some ways, then, a school course is likely to be quite specific in nominating some of its oral requirements, but our example also shows a movement towards seeing work in this area as the pursuit of all-pervasive speech qualities, towards defining aims in terms of **general skills,** such as being able to express oneself 'in an acceptable way' or 'to use language economically and effectively'.

What this example is trying to do is, of course, what every school syllabus working on the basis of our Guidelines-derived English teaching model must do and that is to flesh the bare frame of purposes out into a full body of real talk and listening activities. It will, therefore, be worth looking at each of the perspectives raised above to see how it may assist us in this development.

2. OTHER WAYS OF LOOKING AT TALK

(a) Types of Activities

The notion of basing our syllabus on a standard set of oral activities has immediate appeal since it is axiomatic that school work should be relevant to the needs and circumstances of the secondary pupil's life. However, it would be difficult, and certainly not desirable, to draw up some nationally prescriptive programme — not just because of the implications and uncertainties inherent in such an undertaking but also because it is the schools themselves that are best able to respond to the call for 'relevance', by being left free to select their own materials and activities in accordance with their own judgment of what is most appropriate and important for their pupils, in their own environment. There is also the strong educational argument that what is needed is not repeated training within the specific oral events which most immediately surround the contemporary school-leaver but rather a development of those general purposes which underlie these and all the other situations the pupil may need to encounter throughout the rest of what one may hope will be a rich and varied life, and

made so partly by his development of a **general** command over his own language.

But if we are thus brought back to the bedrock of purposes, a selection of specific activities still has to be built up on it and it will be helpful to consider later in the chapter some of the attempts that have been made to draw up sets of oral priorities for our secondary pupils.

(b) **Contexts**

From this perspective, speech is viewed as a series of utterances each one of which takes its shape from the way in which it is blended with the actual circumstances surrounding it. Linguistic study — as has been noted in Chapter 1 — has identified a whole network of pressure-lines that operate upon any one piece of talk and it would be quite possible to employ its categories in order to permutate sets of those variables which, ideally, our pupils should be made to encounter if they are to gain experience in the actualities of talk: how large is the audience? how formal the situation? what is the relationship between speaker and listener — expert to uninitiated, group member to his intimates? is the topic familiar or especially got up? will the talk be spontaneous or scripted? is the situation closed, or is it open to speaker-listener interaction?

For teaching purposes, however, we will simply have to accept that we can only offer a pupil a sample experience of working within such complexities, sufficient to give him an awareness of the needs to work out ways of satisfying audience and situation demands in **any** talk and also to give him some practice in handling the most basic types of oral contexts. A very simplified categorisation is set out in the Guidelines:

1. *one-to-one talk,*
2. *solo talk to an audience,*
3. *group participation*

If care is taken to give opportunity for work in each of these three broad fields and if attention is also paid to the need to vary the **formal** with the **informal** in each case, then the pupil will at least have been given a basic introduction to the more significant aspects of speech context. Thus, to pursue our chapter 2 example, Willie could be asked to:

1a) carry out a conversation with a classmate on the general topic of pets (Informal)
1b) be interviewed by his teacher on the care of rabbits (Formal)

2a) tell a group of classmates the story of what happened when the rabbit escaped (I)
2b) give a three minute prepared talk to the whole class, using the OHP and other aids, on the topic of 'the care of rabbits' (F)

3a) discuss a newspaper story on vivisection in a group (I)
3b) act as chairman, and report back to the rest of the class, of a group debating the rights and wrongs of hare-coursing. (F)

A crucial consideration in any oral context is also its **spontaneity** and it will — as above — be important to vary class experiences along the 'spontaneous — prepared' axis; just as consideration will have to be given to formal as against informal qualities. However, while attention will have to be given to both 'spontaneous' and 'prepared' talk, as the Guidelines tell us, this need not complicate teaching matters. Clearly, it will be more a case of providing an opportunity for the former simply to take place and of perhaps using it as a starting point for the development of formal speech skills, rather than undertaking the contradictory business of 'preparing' pupils for it. And indeed elsewhere 'informal' and 'formal' may be seen as separate stages of the oral development process and their teaching thus be simplified. Willie's teacher interview on the care of rabbits, for instance, could be prepared for by a free conversation on the more open topic of pets and the formal and informal thus be united into the one teaching activity.

(c) **General Skills**

Many other oral syllabuses, quite apart from our school example, like to approach skill in talk as a collection of desirable general attributes such as 'eloquence', 'fluency', 'articulateness', and an ability to employ techniques such as 'intonation', 'phrasing' and 'voice production'. In all these instances, however, the essential emphasis seems to be on some generalised notion of oral performance and this, I think, brings us back to the kind of objections raised in considering the 'Performance' approach in Chapter 1.

For instance, in her booklet **What is Spoken English?**, Christabel Burniston of the English Speaking Board lists the 'cardinal points' with which to answer the question of her title and does so in a way that vividly shows a crucial problem raised by a 'general skills' approach, that of resting on an overgenerality which borders on an unconvincing verbalism. If such as her 'clarity and precision without affectation or aggression' and 'clear and purposeful enunciation' have any substance it is as dramatic properties to be developed and assessed in those specially created set pieces that most vividly exhibit them — the adjudicated talk, recitation and reading aloud.

This is not to say that there is no such thing as a general oral skill that will help its possessor to cope with the demands of a whole range of situations, that terms like 'clarity' and 'impact on audience' are without significance, only that it is impossible to extract them from the actual speech contexts which give them form and meaning: 'clarity', yes, but clear enough to convey what, to whom, with what result and under which circumstances? To attempt to contrive some all-purpose oral list from the infinite possibilities of active oral usage is really an attempt to solidify that which is inherently complex, fluid and variable.

(d) Purposes — Once More

In other words, we must set so-called general skills in the context of particular situations and this brings us back to the value of defining oral skills as communication purposes. Here, as we have already seen, 'skill' is viewed as the capacity to fulfil the range of personal and social needs that make up a full life within the community. This ability may be expressed in terms of basic intention — 'to persuade', 'to instruct', 'to order' — or in terms of activity — 'telephoning', 'interviewing', 'carrying messages'. In either case, the essential emphasis is upon the individual's purpose in using his speech to communicate his needs and views to other people in a given situation.

(e) The Need for a Comprehensive List

However, **'purposes'**, like 'general skills', remain rather abstract notions and will have to be built up into a meaningful teaching programme by drawing upon the other perspectives dealt with above. A logical procedure would be to take each one of the Guidelines' five basic purposes in turn and then to establish corresponding situations by subjecting it to the linguist's basic **context** question of 'who, to whom, about what, why, how and on what occasion?' An example of a purpose would be 'talking to convey information'; an example of a corresponding context would be 'informing a small known audience — perhaps a group of classmates — on how to accomplish an everyday task like mending a puncture'. The appropriate range of variables could then be worked out by, say, turning the audience into a larger group of strangers or by scaling up the information task into one involving a specialist skill, or a general theory first studied in a reference book — and so on.

Similarly, a consideration of the type of activity and the general skills involved will also play its part, for, while it is true that our basic group of purposes must be given a variety of contextual realisations, it is equally true that any syllabus can only sample some of the multiplicity of possible oral situations. This means that our choice of classroom work could profitably be guided by checking it against some well-judged list of the **types of activity** that are to be considered as the most appropriate for the contemporary secondary pupil. And while it is desirable that **general skills** be treated not as explicit performance aims but as functions of a range of communication purposes, teachers will nevertheless find it useful to retain a simple checklist of general attributes such as 'delivery', 'audibility', 'impact' and 'intelligibility' through which to review the overall development of pupils as they move through their variety of separate oral tasks.

3. School Examples

We shall, therefore, in this section start off by looking at the kinds of checklists of contexts, activities and skills that are available to a teacher attempting to construct his own oral syllabus, before returning to one based on purposes. Then we shall offer our outline syllabus map in which all of these different elements are combined into one total scheme of oral work. These general outlines will lead into our final set of examples which will be drawn from the units of work and year-long courses by which schools have attempted to integrate oral work into their English syllabuses.

(a) Types of Activities

Obviously, a full list of feasible oral activities could become endless and firm syllabus choices will have to be made. English teachers who are trying to establish a sense of priorities here may find it helpful to look at some of the work of Richard Ellis, formerly of Stevenson College, Edinburgh, now at Queen's College, Glasgow. Ellis has drawn up an informal list of priority oral 'aims'.

WHAT ARE WE AIMING AT WHEN WE TEACH ORAL SKILLS?

A basic minimum of skills should consist of:

(An explicit understanding of the value of oral skills at work and in social life; much as in the same way as teachers expect pupils and students to have an appreciation of the importance of full stops and capitals in written expression. An understanding of the great potential of the voice and the face as communication 'exchanges'.)

1. *An ability to converse on a subject, keeping to the point, knowing when to interrupt and how to interrupt without causing offence. Being able to talk to a group or to a person so that they can hear our words clearly. To be able to listen to someone and by doing so to encourage them to continue speaking.*
2. *An ability to answer clearly and sincerely formal questions put during the course of an interview or assessment. To know how to phrase questions in a formal way; to know how to begin and terminate such an interview.*
3. *An ability to be clear and polite on the telephone. To be aware of the courtesies of the telephone user and the need for attention to a pleasant vocal tune and clear articulation of important details.*
4. *To have confidence to make a request in a formal situation, to express dissatisfaction without causing offence; to be able to handle a complaint without losing temper; to be able to reassure someone with anxiety about a situation.*
5. *To be able to explain, in clear terms, a process or part of a task.*
6. *To be able to read aloud to a very small group in such a way as to interest them in the subject matter. To have knowledge of the immense importance of reading to young children.*

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORAL SYLLABUS — METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY OUTLINE

1. The Formative Assessment Approach

The 'English teaching' model proposed in earlier chapters is very much a pragmatic strategy fashioned out of a simplified view of the talk process as a rehearsed skill that is subject to the same kind of 'drafting' procedures as is writing. Here we investigate the effectiveness of this approach by setting it against actual examples of pupil work, the resulting examination being intended both to test the model and to fill out our understanding of what it may, or may not, be able to offer as a general teaching technique.

The first step is to set out a clear statement of the teaching steps that might enable us to apply a formative procedure to Talk, before moving on to a consideration of what kind of classroom practice may be based on it. Three examples follow, in each one of which we may observe the pupil responding well to the chance to work directly on his own oral performance. It has to be conceded, however, that each of these cases either presents a straightforward language task — to instruct in a procedure or to observe telephoning routines — or reveals a surface weakness such as monotony of intonation that makes it well fitted for directed remediation. The question remains as to whether the formative assessment method can help the pupil in meeting larger, more complex oral needs.

2. The Nature of Talk

To explore this point, Section 2 offers some fresh examples that now serve to complicate the teaching issues. First we hear a set of young pupils involved in vigorous and independent group discussion. The quality is high as the talk develops its own vivid momentum. Yet, this same quality is produced in an untaught context, is even, to a significant extent, dependent upon the freedom these pupils enjoy to create their own informal dialogue. They seem to have benefited from the chance to engage in talk activity that finds its strength from its basis in their own natural talk. This observation leads us to consider the ways in which talk is **different** from writing; it is more open and fluid, more of a shared process in which an immediate sense of listener-audience, that we can come to relate to, may play a larger role in its improvement than the chance to work at it as a disciplined and repeatable product.

3. The Formative Approach Modified

The conclusion is that our Chapter 2 model must be seen as being limited in its scope of teaching operation. While it is still useful in that it enables us to focus on specific talk problems, or to practise pupils in the meeting of specific message-carrying demands, it cannot by itself succeed in showing the pupil how to cope with larger, more open and generalised speech situations. For development here we must concentrate our teaching as much on the speaker as upon particular performances.

The importance of personal and situational factors is confirmed by another example which shows a pupil attempting to deliver a talk 'failing', not because of any skill deficiency, but because it is the formality of the situation and the impersonality of his audience that overwhelm him, factors in which 'drafting' is quite beside the point.

4. Talk — Writing: Differences in Character

5. The Example of Jackie

These observations are brought together in Section 4 where suggestions as to the different tendencies of Talk and Writing are listed, the main point being that the latter is relatively fixed and impersonal compared to a mode in which situation, relationships and personal factors play a much larger part. The major example of Jackie's talk enables us to explore these differences in detail as we hear her first attempting to improve her solo-talk performance through revising it direct, via a taped version; making some progress perhaps, but never succeeding in speaking as well on the same topic as she does when she is given the chance simply to relax into a less formal conversation and to feel a sense of listener support. The result is that what was uncertain, dull and stilted now becomes vivid, original and full of talkative vitality.

Some Conclusions

This leads to the conclusions that, while we will find it useful to employ the kind of formative assessment techniques delineated in our model, such directed teaching must be carried out in a supportive context of rich, varied oral activity which recognises the way in which pupil talk is rooted in the conversational and finds its sustenance in its contact with 'listeners' rather than 'audiences'. These points are summarised into a teaching pattern which suggests that we should set our formative teaching in a larger cycle of pupil development, whose characteristic movement is from the open and the informal towards the kind of formal, specific talk implied by a 'purpose' dominated teaching model.

School Experience

The major example of Jackie's talk is included in the body of the chapter. This, however, only represents the

More advanced skills

To be able to give a short talk to a group based on prepared notes; to be able to handle questions from the listening group; to be able to back up an opinion; to have an idea of visual aids.

To be able to put forward a case as a spokesman for a particular group. to be able to take part in a debate or formal meeting; to know something about committee procedure.

More advanced reading aloud. Performance of poetry, plays, prose pieces, extended improvisation, scripted material.

From out of the interesting mixture of tasks and associated qualities that Ellis offers us the following types of activity emerge:

First — Conversational competence
Interviews; question-handling (one-one)
Telephoning
Simple social transactions, interchanges (making a request, offering reassurance)
Explanations and instructions (how something works, what needs to be done)
Reading aloud.

Next — Prepared talks and question-handling (solo-audience)
Argument and debate
Formal meetings and Committee procedure
Performance: drama, recitation, improvision.

In a school English course, we should probably be as well to resist any thought of translating Ellis's summary into a sequenced programme, especially since 'earlier' places are reserved for the more utilitarian usages only. Our over-riding aim of competence **and** growth should remind us that any properly balanced course at any level must include an experience of all major language purposes from the very start.

If Ellis's second set of skills are interpreted as 'advanced' in the sense of being more 'difficult' rather than separate, then his statement of essential aims may be seen as a helpfully succinct expression of priorities.

(b) **Contexts**

In the earlier part of this chapter, the point was made that although a whole variety of situational factors may act upon any one utterance, and do so in a variety of combinations, both the teachers and the pupils' practical needs are best met first, by using the three broad categories suggested in the Guidelines:

One-to-one talk
Solo talk to an audience
Participation in a group

and then by ensuring that practice in both 'spontaneous' and 'prepared', and also in 'informal' and 'formal' situations, is given within each of them.

However, it was also suggested that a teaching simplication could be made, by first of all treating the 'informal' and 'spontaneous' as being areas best served by the provision of classroom opportunity rather than structured teaching, and secondly by viewing all such variables as stages within the one formative process. Our 'contexts' checklist can therefore be summarised thus:—

	Informal/ Spontaneous →	Formal/ Prepared
One-to-one Solo to audience Group participation	Untaught; plentiful classroom opportunity given. Class as whole involved.	Occasionally sample from previous column will be selected for working up into a formal/prepared product. Teaching by formative assessment methods. Pupils taken in turn through session, as appropriate.

'Plentiful' opportunity may be provided through the general teaching of the class where oral discussion, the giving and receiving of instructions, explanations, pupil anecdote and story exchange, group work and other such basic activity, should take place as a matter of English classroom routine.

'Selection' for formative teaching will partly be opportunistic — a matter of the teacher watching out for promising openings as they happen to appear among his pupils' general classroom talk: for example, one pupil's knowledge or interest in the topic under general discussion, so making it a suitable time for his attempt at a more formal piece of talk. Obviously, good record-keeping and, for pupils who **never** seem to be motivated, some direction and an element of rostering will be inevitable.

(c) **General Skills**

Many checklists are available and it is best to avoid both the elaborate ('awareness and feeling for significant rhythm of speech which includes the pointing of key words and the subordination of unimportant words')

and the vague ('alert association of ideas in verbal terms'). It may be more helpful to think initially in terms of three broad areas of 'Voice', 'Message' (or 'Context'), 'Style', and then to list the associated factors against each so as to provide a checklist of 'Subskills' on which to draw when giving particular teaching advice. Banff Academy gives us a representative example, though one that is more suited to the solo-audience format than the other two contexts — in these cases some adaptation would have to be made to include interactional qualities such as 'ability to collaborate', 'to take others' views into account'.

Voice/Delivery	—	*Loudness* *Clarity* *Tone* *Fluency*
Content/Form	—	*Knowledge* *Organization, Coherence of ideas* *Speech register* *Word choice*
Style/Manner	—	*Audience contact* *Stance* *Notes, Aids* *Impact*

(d) **Purposes**

We have already established that our fundamental syllabus element is to be the oral purpose and, of course, this is the Guidelines' policy as well. The '5 purposes' represent, however, a very compressed summary of the range of intentions for which speech may be employed by the individual in his personal and social living. The result is some very gross categorisation indeed, with, for example, a class such as 'to create particular effects' having to cover a plethora of possible usages. And, in general, further clarification is required of the austere terminology employed so that the teaching needs of pupils learning to 'deploy' ideas, to work 'towards a common goal', 'to convey' information and so on, may be more clearly identified.

For those seeking a fuller and more discursively worded list, it is again the work of Richard Ellis that will provide the best available help. His article 'Oral Skills and their Identification' which appeared in **Teaching English** in 1981 is widely enough available for it not to require reproduction here. It is sufficient to remind readers that Ellis first of all establishes four major communication fields — the Instructional, the Interactional, Representative and Imaginative (based on Halliday's linguistic analysis of function) — but then most usefully elaborates 21 subdivisions so as to provide a comprehensive and well-balanced account of oral tasks. Ellis's work is impressive, his list cogently set out and supplemented by helpful notes of explanations in which he suggests how general activities may be converted into clearly defined situations: for example, 'Representative' skills are exemplified by the task of 'giving a short (under 5 minutes) talk to a group using notes and aids if necessary. Making a reasonable effort at eye contact and answering questions from the listening group'. Above all, Ellis is informed by a sensible awareness of the needs and possibilities of average school pupils: his list thus identifies recognizable priorities like 'Telephone Skills', 'Reading a short letter to an individual and making it sound sense'.

4. Purposes, Activities, Skills and Contexts — A Comprehensive List

Although Ellis's scheme can be recommended, perhaps it is not yet the final guideline that we are seeking. In some ways it is rather unbalanced for a school course (it is worth bearing in mind Ellis's background in vocational training), in the way that it leans towards the utilitarian and away from personal needs and creative usages. There might, therefore, be a value in attempting to draw up a school version of oral purposes in which Ellis's categories are re-ordered and supplemented so as to answer the demand for a rich, balanced education. Furthermore, there is a need to make such a list complete in the ways previously indicated, and that is by building definitions of contexts, skills and activities on to our basic purposes and so developing them into a comprehensive statement of oral syllabus needs.

What is offered on the following pages is an attempt to sketch in such an outline.

AN ORAL SYLLABUS GUIDELINE

PURPOSE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	CONTEXT	SKILLS	CLASS WORK
* 1. Information. Facts, Ideas. Comment on Work in progress.	Plans, Records. Summaries, Accounts. Messages, Briefing, Commentary.	— to another (one-to-one) —to an audience — within group Repeat for all 'Purposes'	('Group' and Interaction Skills for all Purposes) Clarity/ Intelligibility. Sequencing. Precision. Relevance. Distinguishing between Facts, Ideas and Opinion. Examples, Illustration. Emphasising main points.	Describe appearances, places, events — local, personal and national. Own biography — curriculum vitae. Summarise newspaper/ TV story/talk by teacher, classmate. 'What is on this week'. Report of group discussion on own folio work, findings, projects of work. Consumer advice reports. Convey message (from one part of school to another).
2. Instruction. Directions. Explanations. Demonstrations.	How to do something, go somewhere, get something. How something works. What to do if . . . Operating/mending instructions. Processes and procedures. Regulations.		Clarity. Sequence/Organization. Presentation/Vividness/ Use of aids. Analogy/Example. Projection to audience/ Precision/Economy/ Relevance.	How to get from/go to. School to home, elsewhere. Where to go for . . . How to take up activity. How to use piece of equipment. Explain rule-school, sport (Offside etc.), Highway Code. Show how to mend (puncture, fuse . . .).

PURPOSE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	CONTEXT	SKILLS	CLASS WORK
3. Enquiry: Asking, Questioning (a) Closed — telephone, specific query. (b) Open — inter-view/ relation-ships/ conversation.	Answering/asking questions. Asking for directions, help, explanation handling queries, complaints and requests, 'consumer' behaviour. Telephoning. Interviews incl. job. Specific social situations (intro-ductions, meetings).		Clarity. Relevance. Self presentation. Courtesy. Register/appropriateness. Working knowledge of rules, specific procedures (eg 'phone). Ability to select, illustrate, give full answer. Awareness of listener/ audience needs/attitudes.	Handling telephone calls — as consumer, as employee/ representative of institution. Asking/answering questions as/of speaker after talk. Conveying messages. Aiding others (Showing them how to, where to . . .). Job interviews, 'form-filling', interviews, (by role-play).
4. Persuasion: (a) Argument, advocacy, point of view (b) Promoting, recommending, criticising/ appreciating.	Justifying case/viewpoint. Expressing opinion/ attitude. Making a reaction to above. Proposing course of action. Debating, discussing. Advertising. Reviewing events, the arts, sport. etc.		Clarity/Organisation. Forcefulness. Use of illustration, analogy. Ability to generalise. Ability to collaborate with others in discussion. To rebut, counter establish, sustain point of view. Impact on audience/ listener, conviction, courtesy	Opinion on everyday/current local issue (Smoking on bus, the belt, the Bomb). Advocating doing, buying, going (trip, holiday, type of equipment etc.). React to proposals by others. Reporting reactions to music, shows, programmes, books, sports, matches.
5. Entertainment/ Representing Life: (a) Sharing experiences (b) Creating.	Personal accounts, anecdotes/expressions of feelings. Story-telling, role-play, dramatisation, poems.		Vividness. Power of language. Shaping talk. Expression/Intonation/ Timing. Audience contact. Inventiveness. Interpretative powers. Empathy-Authenticity of voice/ gesture, etc.	Personal accounts of experiences that have 'meant something' to speaker — (The moment when . . . A vivid memory . . . I couldn't help laughing . . . My first . . .). Dramatising poems, stories — improvisation/working to script. Continuing stories read in class. Dramatising situations, real-life encounters, projected situations.

PURPOSE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	CONTEXT	SKILLS	CLASS WORK
Supplementary Purposes				
A Reading Aloud	Letters, passages from books. Factual reports, newspaper, instructions. Dramatic scripts, poems.		Voice. Delivery. Accuracy. Interpretative power.	Regular treatment built into ongoing classwork.
B. Meetings	Informal groups. Committee work. Debates. Organisational/Community meetings.		Knowledge of procedure. Play 'group' roles — chairman, secretary, reporter-back. Take a side in argument. Courtesy/Audience awareness.	

*** 'GROUP/INTERACTION' SKILLS**

'Skills' are based on one-to-one and solo-to-audience contexts, except where 'Purpose' is obviously characterised as predominately a group one as in 'Meetings'. It is, however, to be hoped that pupils will be given experience of dealing with each of the 'Purposes' in a 'group' as well as in 'solo' and 'partner' contexts, in which case a further set of considerations will come into play such as the ability to collaborate, to establish viewpoint, to sustain it, to listen to and build on others' statements, to counter and rebut argument, to play a specific role (chairman, secretary, reporter-back).

'SUPPLEMENTARY PURPOSES'

'Reading Aloud' and 'Meetings' (as 'group work') are essentially activities which could — indeed should — be used as a regular part of classroom treatment of the main purposes listed above. However, it may be felt that as with the 'Enquiry' class — about which a similar view could be held — these two activities represent specific tasks and situations which are important enough to be given a separate heading — if only to ensure that pupils really are given practice in the socially important skills they entail.

NOTES

(i) The 'Purpose' classifications, being an attempt to reconcile economy with coverage, are arbitrary and overlap, somewhat, but they do, I hope, at least indicate how a balanced course may be achieved by basing oral work on some sense of the different purposes for which talk is used, followed by their translation into actual activities. Similarly, it is hoped that the attempt to identify oral usages in terms of a small number of underlying purposes will help the English teacher achieve some measure of economy of action. It is difficult to see how an oral course which is both full **and** manageable could be offered without recourse to some such guideline as this.

(ii) One of the chief values of thinking of the English syllabus as language 'purposes' lies in its capacity to generate ideas for classwork — a power which is represented in this model by its across-the-page movement. The 'classwork' items are, therefore, only put in as illustration — as always, it will be for individual teachers to make their own selections.

(iii) These guidelines give some promise — it is best to put the matter no higher — that systematic thinking of this type will help to make the oral syllabus a manageable proposition. A crude 'costing' exercise on it suggests that:

(a) **Activities**

We have 5 main oral areas (purposes) each of which should be treated in 3 major contextual ways — a total of 15 oral categories to be covered. If, thinking realistically, we assume one session per week is to be made available for 'Talk' (and the Guidelines prescription implies that we ought to be ready to give it at least 20% of our time), then in 30 weeks of teaching time, there should be room to treat each 'category' twice, still leaving extra space in the year for revision, examinations, and other events.

(b) **Pupils**

It will be impossible to give each pupil in a normal-sized secondary class full-scale formative assessment teaching for each of these 15 oral categories, for, unlike in Writing, performances must take place in time-consuming sequence. If there are 30 pupils to be dealt with in one hour a week then it is difficult to see how more than 2 or 3 can receive individualized formative 'tuition' in that time. And while our 30 week course span should enable the individual to enjoy such treatment perhaps 3 times a year, this will mean that for him many of the categories of oral work have not been dealt with in this way.

However, this is a broadly arithmetical way of looking at a syllabus which most English teachers would prefer to regard as a whole entity in which activities are integrated, and in which there is room for some natural development to take place. As such, our quantification both under-and over-states the likely difficulties — to ensure equitable treatment among pupils, we would have to subject them to a regimen of rostering and record-keeping that would be both onerous in itself and run counter to the organic character of our subject. Conversely, it could be argued that the schedule, roughed out above, need only be treated as a useful planning and reviewing device because, in practice, different oral activities will intermingle within units of work so that it will be possible to achieve a more economical handling of them: for example, we may combine two or three talk categories with a pupil as a normal part of his treatment of a topic. Thus he could be led to deliver a 'talk' on a topic that he has just been 'interviewed' on, or to extend an 'informative' approach into an 'explanatory' or 'persuasive' one. Or there is the possibility of catching the oral efforts of several pupils concurrently as they move from, say, group to individual treatment of a subject, or as they join to participate in one session of reporting or role-play.

(iv) These points are worth labouring, not only because it is important to remind ourselves (and others!) of the need to match syllabus idealism with actualities but also to make an important point about the nature of 'formative assessment'. Although it is associated with drafting and pupil-teacher interaction, the term must be interpreted as depicting a teaching style and not be taken as a commitment to the continual individual coaching of every pupil in the class. By this, we mean that the teaching method will proceed by active demonstration of how to go about communicating in certain situations, how to attack typical problems. While such demonstration will be based on actual pupil example it cannot (and, to make its teaching points, need not) take up every single piece of work done, since the learning needs of most pupils in a class can be shared with and be represented by the work of one of them. Programmes of work will have to be designed in such a way as to ensure that each pupil gets his due share of individual attention, but that for the most part his problems will find illustrative treatment in the work of others.

Nevertheless, the oral syllabus is still in a very early stage of development and we need much more experience in its conduct before we can say that we have sorted out the related management issues. There is a very great need for some good going action research on how best to exploit classroom strategies such as group work and peer assessment, as well as for schools to share their experiences with each other in coping with these problems through in-depth documentation of them. Certainly a background document such as this can only sketch in outline possibilities and, to some extent, make guesses about the feasibility of a wide-ranging, nicely-balanced (and properly taught) oral syllabus.

(iv) An obvious danger in defining the ingredients for an **Oral Syllabus** is that we appear to imply

that it forms a 'separate' activity. It is important to stress that we do not regard it as so, that our treatment here is determined by convenience of discussion only and that we believe strongly that Talk and Listening are best dealt with as integral parts of the whole English course — a theme taken up elsewhere in this document.

5. School Experience

(a) Oral Activities within a Unit

Below is an analysis of the oral elements contained within a unit that had been planned for use with an S3 'Foundation' set in a First Line Pilot school, Our Lady's High School, Motherwell. The unit is entitled 'Growing Up' and involves texts, materials and language activities that are readily suggested by the issues surrounding this topic. What is of interest here is the way in which this piece of work may be handled as an integral part of one 6-8 week course.

It also demonstrates how in actual practice, analyzably different oral categories do naturally combine and thus make it possible to cover a wider range of skills and issues than mere reference to the Guidelines may suggest. Above all, this example confirms the checklist status of our 'Oral Syllabus' model; it is to be used as a means of directing and reviewing work — in no way can it be implemented as an item by item programme.

This analysis follows one provided by Jim Duffin, P.T. English in the school — comments in brackets are direct quotations.

Activity 1: Taped Interview

*Pupils read the short story 'My Oedipus Complex' by Frank O'Connor. They then work in pairs, interviewing each other about **their** families.*

Work is in the **one-to-one** context with **Enquiry** purpose ('open-relationships/conversation') being practised. Associated skills would also help give preparation for the **Information** area and also involve some **Entertainment** ('sharing experience') work.

(The extent to which these opportunities were taken up would obviously vary from pupil to pupil, and some direct instruction would probably be required, perhaps making use of selected tape outcomes for demonstration purposes . . . The weakness is that while **scope** is provided for the exercise and development of all these skills, the inherent artificiality of the exercise militates against there being any real **demand** on the pupil to display them. Heavy reliance, therefore, would be placed on the motivating power of the literary stimulus and on the ability of the teacher to whip up enthusiasm.)

Activity 2: Telephone Assignment

After reading and listening to Lennon and McCartney's 'She's Leaving Home', the class do some role-play work in which they take turns at taking parts in the parent-police conversation about the 'missing girl' that is imagined to ensue as a sequel to the song. Real telephones are used — the 'phone' in the English Base is connected up with the Library one.

Enquiry, Telephone Skills are practised as are **Information,** in a **one-to-one** context.
(Again, the context is imagined rather than real so that the teacher would have to work hard to maintain credibility).

Activity 3: Writing and Recording a Radio Play

Class listen to a play about a fight on tape. Then in groups they make up and record a radio play about what happens when the one who is badly hurt in the fight is visited in hospital by his assailant. Pupils work in groups of 4 or 5.
Two clearly defined stages are entailed: the making-up of the play which will involve discussion and working together in a **group** context, followed by actual recording which demands reading aloud and dramatisation skills **(Entertainment).** As well as qualities associated with these areas, some **Information** (commenting on work in progress) and **Instruction** work will become involved.
(The main difficulty is that highly motivated/articulate pupils tend to dominate).

Activity 4: Giving a Short Talk to Class or Group

After reading the story 'The Kiss', the class are asked to go into groups to tell each other about individual memories of incidents like the one in the story, especially those on the lines of: 'Did anything ever happen to you because you thought something was true which later you found out was not?' 'Talk about some of the things you believed in when you were young, e.g. Santa Claus'.

After **group** discussion, selected pupils can offer their accounts to the class as a whole, in the solo-audience context. **Entertainment/Representing Life** through experience sharing is again called for.

Activity 5: Group Discussion

Following a class treatment of 'The Choosing' by Liz Lochhead, groups are formed, in which the issue is debated of whether the central character should leave school or stay on to sit her 'O' Grades.
Opinions and conclusions may then be reported back to the class as a whole, thus leading to **Persuasion,** (argument, advocacy work).

A checklist review of this unit reveals a satisfying variety of activity, purposes and contexts being laid open to the pupils. Thinking in terms of our major 'Purposes', only 'Instruction' is not represented, an omission that can, of course, be compensated for in the design of the subsequent unit.

List of some of the oral work extracted from Foundation Course Units in 3rd and 4th Years. Each unit lasts approximately one term and attempts to cover all four modes. (Not mixed-ability classes.)

1. Literature-based Units

(a) **The Dangerous Ones**

Group discussion worksheets before sequencing exercise.

Group discussion and class discussion following VCR 'I Want To Be Like You'.

Visiting classes in pairs to explain and administer questionnaire on 'Smoking'.

Mini-debate.

Play-reading and recording of 'Five Green Bottles'.

Telephoning in pairs on internal telephone (1) from script of conversation based on novel (2) after preparation for telephoning emergency services.

(b) **The Pit**

Group cloze; group discussions before worksheets on chapter content, on language points; while writing role-playing scripts; during and as part of specially-devised board game on **The Pit;** after VCRs and song lyrics connected with themes; preparation for talking to old people and carrying this out during visit to O.P. Home at end of Unit.

(c) **A Kind of Loving**

Group discussion worksheets on play; telephone conversation between flat owner and flat hunter (cf. Vic and Ingrid); group discussion on VCR 'Young Marriage' and on Gilbert O'Sullivan's 'A Woman's Place'; speech at union meeting on provision of nursery for children of working mothers.

2. A Language-based Unit

Interviewing individuals to answer questionnaire on dialect; class discussion and illustration of 'register'; group discussion from worksheets on different accents illustrated on VCR, e.g. **The Importance of being Earnest, The Long and the Short and the Tall,**; job interview (in groups of three); eye-witness account of accident (dialect); reading of extracts in different dialects; reading of poem in two different ways; News Report read in Glaswegian and R.P.; improvisation of accents and dialects after VCR 'We All Talk Different'.

3. An Image-based Unit

Descriptions by pupils of slides; of moods in landscape; of tricks and illusions; group discussions in preparation for scripts and different scenes of video to be shot.

Dialogue and 'Voice-over' passages for video produced on 'Aspects of School Life'.

4. Two slide-Tape Units — based originally on interest deriving from unit on **Kestrel for a Knave.**

(1) Animals in Camperdown Zoo (2) Animals Indigenous to Scotland

Group discussions as preparation for asking questions from local and Edinburgh Zoos, and as preparation for writing script for slide tapes. Producing tape for these.

5. Slide-Tape Unit on Welcome to Bonnie Dundee

(An 'educational' introduction for Vietnamese refugees).

Interviewing various people regarding taking of slides, e.g. supermarket manager, librarian, transport managers, post office manager, etc. Group discussions regarding format of slide-tape; on writing script. Reading of script.

6. Drama-based Unit

(a) (Social Conflict)

Oral work involved in improvisation, role-play, interview techniques, dramatisation of texts, tape-recording in pairs and groups.

(b) Oral work involved in scripting scenes from **Little Women** (pupil choice!) rehearsing and finally acting these.

(a) Oral Activities over the whole Session

The following outline description of work at St. Saviours, Dundee, shows how a rich diversity of well balanced oral activity may be incorporated into a whole year's course, by making a carefully varied bank of units available. Note that what we have here is not one actual syllabus scheme but rather a summary of a whole school's provision. But each class will get through 6 of these units during its S3/S4 course so ensuring an overall coverage of 'purposes' and 'contexts'.

7. Radio-based Unit

Each pupil has at least one part on a tape which includes different types of radio programmes: interviews, disc jockeys, story-telling, phone-ins, current events, news and weather reports.

8. Community-based Unit

Oral work involved in preparation for questions to ask visitors: police, dietician, dentist, doctor, beautician, and for conversation with visitor during tea afterwards.

solo-audience context; we therefore attach a second substantive example, that of interview, or one-to-one context, work carried out at Our Lady's High School, Motherwell.

Finally, some 'specific suggestions' are offered in note-form as a brief review of other methods of teaching oral skills that are currently being developed in schools, such as 'role play', 'video work', peer conversation and evaluation.

Tape Extracts referred to:— Nos 2-14

1. The Formative Assessment Approach

The 'English teaching' model does, as we have now tried to demonstrate, make for orderly, purposeful planning. By treating Talk and Listening as simply sets of communication problems, we have set up a practical logic that may be readily worked out to yield a full, well-balanced account of all the teaching items which ought to appear on the oral agenda. But however clear the outline, the real value of what we have, after all, termed a **teaching** approach will lie in the kind of learning experiences that it offers the individual pupil. To investigate this it will be necessary to listen to some more examples of classroom work to add to that of Willie's talk in Chapter 2.

Before we do that, however, it will be useful to spell out the methodology that was quickly summarised there. Essentially, it is one that is based on the employment of a task analysis to identify the skills to be practised and the adoption of a formative assessment strategy by which to teach them. This pattern may be broken down into these clear stages for the teacher:

1. Present the oral activity to the pupil in the form of a 'purpose', a communication problem to be met by him — the 'task'.
2. Analyse the skills necessary to accomplish the task and adopt a coaching role.
3. Give the pupil the opportunity — within the context of the unit — to attempt task, but on a 'first draft' basis.
4. Review performance with pupil and suggest ways to improve it, by drawing on the preliminary analysis carried out at Stage 2.
5. Give pupil further opportunities to attempt activity.
6. After pupil's final version attained and assessed, draw attention to any implications that emerge from this example for future oral work.

Models of good oral practice, either on tape or by immediate demonstration, can be introduced anywhere into this sequence at the opportune moment. Similarly, the task itself may be defined into simpler steps so as to furnish appropriate levels of teaching support for different ability levels. Whatever exact routine is selected, the basic approach remains a formative one in that the pupil is to be helped to learn through his own performance.

Let us now listen to three tapes that demonstrate and, I think, justify these teaching propositions.

Tape Extract 2

You will hear two different items attempted by the same 'Foundation-course' pupil as part of his work within a 'local community' unit at Portree High School.[1] In the first, he is giving a talk on work in the quarries where his father is employed, and in the second he is telling us about another feature of Skye life, the Forestry Commission plantations near Portree. ('Information'; 'solo-audience').

The sound quality is poor so that only brief extracts are offered but they should be enough to make the point that it is by reviewing the evidence offered by his first attempt, that the pupil will be able to get a clear and irresistible picture of what needs to be remedied. In this instance a very straightforward procedure has been followed: the pupil has listened to the recording of his talk on quarrying and discussed its weakness with his teacher. The result is gratifyingly immediate. The impact of listening to his own monotonous and script-dependent incantation has, along with some sensitive teaching counsel, been enough to propel him towards a style of speaking which, in his second example, has a varied pace and lively sense of audience that convey quick proof of an oral lesson clearly learned.

Tape Extract 3

The activity here is telephoning ('Enquiry': 'one-to-one'); the teacher and a pupil at Harlaw Academy work together within an S3 'Holiday' unit. An apparatus has been rigged up which enables the class to take turns in trying out the general advice offered to them at the beginning of the lesson (a well-provisioned group and individualised system allows the teacher to move from whole-class teaching to individual application in this way). Again, because of space this time, it is only possible to supply two brief clips, one from the initial instruction, the second from a simulated telephone call in which the teacher takes the part of a holiday-firm official discussing a booking hitch with the pupil 'client', a piece of role-play that gives him the opportunity to try out the pupil's implementation of what he has been taught and also to manoeuvre him into making the kind of precise, clear transfer of information that is basic to this speaking 'purpose'.

(Note, for example, the implied reminder in the 'who's speaking?' as the start of the conversation, and the later requests for clarification during the exchange of family details.)

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1. The sound quality of this extract is due to copying and not due to the school.

Tape Extract 4

The University of Stirling's 'Language Skills' Project yields this extract — again necessarily brief — in which the teacher invites a group of pupils to use a local map to instruct him by oral commentary on the best route to take from his home to the school. Once more, the teaching value of placing the pupil in a position where he has to attack a clear-cut problem enables him to identify and to practise the skills involved. Note here how the teacher's preferred tactics — the use of orientation points, of an unambiguous agreed terminology, for example — quickly prove their use in shaping the pupil's efforts and how the ensuing dialogue acts both as a reminder of and a check on their use.

2. The Nature of Talk

These extracts have shown how the basic methodology outlined at the start of this chapter may, with profit, be applied across a variety of oral situations. Yet, despite their differences, it must be admitted that our three examples do share a common straightforwardness in both the communication problems they raise and in the treatments they suggest. The Portree talk raised difficulties at the easily observed level of presentation, so that they could be remedied by the introduction of straightforward considerations like 'pace' and 'intonation'. The second extract involved training in a highly specific situation where the telephone apparatus itself imposes certain universally recognized procedures. Finally, the route-plotting activity has narrowed the 'Instructional' needs down to a very manageable and physically-supported series of verbal steps. In short, while they all represent genuine enough oral situations, Extracts 2, 3 and 4 confine themselves to closed problems where the communication purposes are fairly basic and the accompanying skills may be clearly recognised and demonstrated. Clearly, there will be larger, more complex oral needs that cannot, perhaps, be so easily reduced to the workable limits of the self-evident task.

Before we conclude, then, that our teaching model really does offer a complete course, it will be enlightening to listen to some further examples of pupil talk. What we have been following since Chapter 2 is, after all, a course of action aimed at helping English teachers meet the urgent classroom needs posed by the imposition of new teaching concerns. While this avowedly pragmatic approach has enabled us to short-circuit theoretical complication, there is always the risk that it may at the same time have narrowed our perceptions of the nature of the oral modes and of any special problem that their teaching may present. It is always possible that the pragmatist's queston of 'what do I know I can do?' might in this case deafen him to an understanding of what he **ought** to be trying to do and that his methodology could become all too readily patterned on the limited range of immediately available routines.

It will therefore be salutary at this point to listen to something a little more open-ended than 'phone-calls' and 'verbal orienteering', to consider a piece of talk which, moreover, refuses to correspond neatly to the more familiar teaching mode of Writing. In **Extract 5** we can listen to a group of six Primary 7 pupils freely discussing a short Ghost story that their teacher has started to read to them, but which he has left unconcluded, with the request that they work out their own ending to it. (A copy of this story and a transcript of the related conversation may be found in Appendix C).

Only a minute or so of what is a lengthy, interesting and energetic discussion is included here, but that is enough to show that even in its early stages this is a piece of talk which has a life, an oral life, all its own. The first feature to notice is, quite simply, how unlike writing it all is. These pupils have been given a definite task, and do set about solving it in a committed fashion, but the direction they take is quite unlike that of the individual writer steadily working towards the production of some independent, tangible statement. Instead, these pupils are immersed in a use of words that is fluid, collective, a process which creates a momentum that impels them together towards their solution. Skills there are, and these may be pinned down to the extent that we can give them names such as 'precision', 'use of evidence in support of opinion', 'ability to counter another's argument', but many of the qualities that make this an effective discussion are really an expression of the group's own interaction. Observe how the speakers collaborate in their speculations (notice even in this brief beginning the number of utterances which start with some such taking-up phrases as 'Yea', 'Right', 'Aye'), or their use of forms which are a natural expression of their desire to work with and for each other (the way they enter each other's argument, adding evidence to it, further defining it, questioning it, and so on). Everywhere there is a mercurial spirit that is far removed from the measured, linear progression of writing.

How good these young pupils are at talking in this way! The variety and sense of purpose are themselves testimony to how natural this kind of informal, collective dialogue is to them. Once again the contrast with writing is most marked. Their success has brought into play a whole range of discussion skills which are not only different from those employed in writing, but indeed run counter to them. As the members of the group join together to speculate, to share in a quick survey of possibilities, to move rapidly from individual opinion to a mutal demonstration of evidence, their utterances are frequently unfinished, they make false starts, pile up repetition, break into the middle of 'sentences' with parenthetical appeals to each other, and generally express themselves in a way that would in writing be considered ill-disciplined indeed.

This primary group has reminded us of the great differences between these two language modes, which have been, to some extent, deliberately evaded by our assumption of an all-purpose English teaching model. Talk is shown here to be a shared experience rather than a solitary discipline, a medium in which the ability to tune into an immediate audience and to respond to the possibilities of the moment are as important as definition of statement and clarity of expression. And the enterprise and drive with which these pupils talk must owe much to the informality and partnership of a situation where they are free to exercise their capacity to use talk as a means of relating to each other in open, creative dialogue.

3. The Formative Approach Modified

The quality of discussion encountered here must throw doubt upon the universal applicability of a teaching approach which, as we observed at the very outset, has been largely derived from writing. A drafting method is one that seeks improvement in expression by working from the outside upon a production which is more fixed, and less immersed in context and audience, than this example has shown talk to be. Indeed any 'teaching' method here has been confined to setting up and stimulating the event in the first place. Once it occurs, its participants generate their own progress by going deeper into the processes of their interaction rather than by rehearsing statements that are independent of it.

This, however, is to put the matter in somewhat partial terms. One immediate qualification to make here is that 'group discussion' is only one out of a whole range of oral forms, and, because of its peculiarly open, interactive character, is to be considered something of a special case. But even within this format, it may also be observed that what we are listening to here is a number of individuals in the early stages of moving towards the ultimate purpose of 'talking to persuade'. Skills such as 'clarity of explanation', 'forceful delivery' and 'the ability to counter others' arguments' will gradually emerge from their present entanglement in the overall dialogue, ready to be put to the service of the separate statements which the different speakers might make when they come to give an account of their individual solutions at the end of the discussion. In this sense the group talk could be viewed as the oral equivalent of the note-making, jotting-down stage in writing which takes place as preliminary to, and not as a substitute for, the production of a draft that can eventually be worked upon directly by teacher and pupil together.

Equally, though, it could be argued that the group discussion is, in fact, a vivid way of revealing the influence of the speaker-listener relationship and of the transient, context-bound nature of talk, qualities that will always play a part in shaping any speech, though not always to this degree. In sum, what this example really does is to help towards a truer estimation of the place of our English teaching model in oral work: while it does have a significant role, it is a general pattern that must be supplemented by other approaches that acknowledge the extent to which Talk does have a character of its own among the language modes.

At the very least we can say that for its participants this group discussion has been important in creating a groundswell that might carry each of them towards the individual statements he or she might eventually be called upon to make. If we now turn to **Tape Extract 6** we can listen to the moment when the teacher returns to ask the group to give an account of its findings (there is no transcript for this section). Already the children have expressed their opinions with some clarity and persuasive force, but they have not yet shown that they are able to work their immediate responses out into a conclusive, fully explained statement. The dynamic nature of their group talk has helped them to get into the problem and to explore a few early solutions with each other. Now they must take up the separate responsibility of explaining themselves to the outside world. And it is from this point onwards that the formative approach can take over in helping to give that explanation shape and clarity — a development which, as we can hear in the teacher's request for them to define and to sort out their opinions, really begins after the group phase has been completed.

All this suggests that we must adopt a methodology which is broad enough to include within its working pattern opportunities for the pupils to talk in ways that build on the strengths revealed here; that is, upon their natural capacity to use speech as the means of maintaining relationships and of expressing a response to the actualities of a situation. Whatever final shape we may eventually wish to impose upon it, we must appreciate that the sources of oral power lie in the impulse to use speech as a means of exploring a situation and of sharing that experience with others.

The conclusion is that the kind of model introduced in Chapter 2 will not by itself be enough to help our pupils work their way towards 'good speech'. Ways must be found of drawing upon the pupil's own oral resources as a chief means of helping him to make sense of the demands of more formal speech situations, if not necessarily by group discussion, at least by giving opportunity, both in our general class work and in the way we prepare our pupils for specific tasks, for the kind of personal, spontaneous talk we heard in Extract 5. It is true that Willie was able to make a reasonable job of his talk on rabbit-keeping and that careful preparation and rehearsal played their part, but it is also the case that the familiarity of his topic and his concentration on his personal experiences of it gave him a real involvement in it and a source of contact with his audience of classmates. And, as her immediate reaction to his talk — to be heard at the very end of that extract — suggests, Willie owes as much to the warm support offered him by his teacher and the sense of interested audience that she can bring to the occasion, as he does to any practising of technique.

Even in this classroom, individuals will find difficulty when they are asked to cope with the formal talk on a less intimate subject. In **Extract 7** we can hear another of his teacher's pupils attempting a speech on 'Nuclear Weapons'. He is the same age as Willie but comes from a top set and is, in general, a much more able, articulate pupil. His 'talk', however, is clearly inferior, on this occasion, and it is not difficult to understand why. The words are halting, the explanations muffled and indecisive, the whole effort quickly petering out. It is not that the oral 'skills' are absent but that the situation itself is too much for him. The over-riding impression is of torment, of a speaker who is overburdened by the strangeness of an event in which he is asked to enter into the artificiality, to him, of a generalised lecture to a remote audience on an impersonal subject.

No amount of defining of purpose, of drafting and of working at this 'version' will help to breathe life and ease into it. To be able to stand up and deliver a forceful point of view on a serious issue is, of course, a significant oral skill, but clearly it must be led up to by a less pressured, informal exchange of preliminary views, where, perhaps, the pupil can talk over his attitudes and review his existing knowledge in the security of an informal discussion, either within a group or through a teacher-pupil dialogue.

4. Talk and Writing: Differences in Character

We must therfore supplement our use of the kind of formative assessment approach proposed in our Chapter 2 model by giving it a context of general classwork that contains opportunity for the pupil to draw upon his natural reserves of personal dialogue, and to practise the kind of open informal talk that is most vividly, but not exclusively, to be found in group discussion. Our methodology must, in other words, be expanded to take into account the following features of Talk, as compared to Writing. It is:

1. **Exploratory** in nature: although it can be organized into the kind of definitive statement that characterises writing, its most immediate function is to enable the speaker to work his way towards an understanding, to engage in a continuing dialogue with his experience and with others.

2. **Fugitive:** Writing is there, fixed on the page, available to be worked upon and improved; Talk flows by, constantly moving into new topics and into fresh expression.

3. **Personal:** Speech is intimately related to both the speaker and to his experience of a particular situation: it is artificial to think of any utterance as having the kind of independent, external existence which enables us to apply prescriptive notions of 'skills' and 'intelligibility' to it. Similarly, idiosyncratic factors such as mood and temperament will come into force.

4. **Open, Complex:** whereas the concept of 'purpose' has obvious relevance to the discipline of writing, its use here is less appropriate since Talk is creative and various in character, with speakers free to play different roles, to switch perspectives.

5. **Dependent on Relationships:** except in specific instances such as the friendly letter, Writing carries with it only a generalised sense of **'audience'** adumbrated by the somewhat impersonal 'the reader'. The speaker, on the other hand, is constantly aware of his listener as an immediate, reacting presence. Much of the energy of his talk will be directed towards sustaining relationships rather than in following a specific remit. It will not so much be talk-directed as **audience-centred.**

6. **Context-dominated:** a piece of writing strives through its self-sufficient clarity to break free from the context which produced it, but Talk has to take place in a situation whose presence is constantly there and whose demands have to be satisfied.

Further reflection will, of course, show that here we have developed a line of argument which has led us to present what are really only differing tendencies as constituting completely separate phenomena, to polarise the issues. In practice, Talk and Writing do serve similar essential expressive and communicative needs, though with differing emphases. The discussion has been worth pursuing in this extreme form, however, in order to remind ourselves that while we can usefully think of Writing as **suggesting** approaches for Talk, the two modes are not identical and do require their own forms of modification for their teaching.

In particular, this section should warn us against adopting methods which are too clearcut and self-contained to serve a mode which is more fluid, more personal, more interactive and more embedded in the immediacy of experience than is the discipline of writing. This means that while the formative assessment strategy will act as a useful focus by which both teacher and pupil may try to work directly on matters of oral skill and performance, there is a need to set such work in a general context of rich, varied activity that recognises the degree to which Talk is a personal development. Similarly, the expectations that we attach to any one teaching sequence must be modest in nature and long-term in outlook.

5. The Example of Jackie

At this point I should like to introduce the case of Jackie, a pupil just going into her second year at an Aberdeen comprehensive. Her teacher describes her as a moderate performer, her written work somewhat less assured and full than her readiness to talk in class might suggest. She is within the broad average-to-below range.

What we are about to listen to is by no means remarkable, nor does it lend itself to dramatic conclusions. The recording, moreover, is of poor audibility, for the machine was kept very much in the background so as not to intrude; in any case, Jackie has neither the experience nor the loudness of personality to project her voice strongly. What our tape extracts do, however, is to show a young secondary pupil speaking at some length, and in different situations. By eaves-dropping in this way, we may, perhaps, catch something of what a fairly typical thirteen year old is capable of doing both on her own initiative and in response to teacher demands. In this way, we might also gain some little insight into the peculiar complexities that surround 'talk' and into the uncertainties which will attend our attempts to teach it.

The classroom background is easily enough sketched in. The teaching intention was to help a mixed group of five, of which Jackie was one, 'to learn' how to speak in order 'to convey information' (GRC Purpose Number 1!). 'Pets' offered a ready topic and the fact that two teachers could be involved with this class at this one point in the week meant that the group could be taken away to a quiet corner of the school library. This, admittedly, is a favoured teaching position to be in, but a reproducible one, at least at certain times in the term when double-banking might become feasible, either as written into the timetable, informally arranged within the Department, or simply as made available by the presence of a teaching-practice student or visiting specialist. And group organization would also have allowed, on this occasion, concentration on one set of pupils within the classroom itself — the telephone instruction in Tape Extract 3 was produced under these circumstances.

The teaching, if that is what it is to be called, was spread over two separate double period sessions. For the first one, we read and discussed James Thurber's vivid portrait of his dog 'Rex', a redoubtable and fiercely loyal terrier. The text aroused great interest and led the group to proffer similar anecdotes about their own pets, including one extraordinarily savage, finger-eating budgie. After about half-an-hour, the moment seemed

ripe to ask the group to prepare a brief stand-up talk on the topic of 'Looking after a Pet'. They were set on their way with some advice on the need to structure their talk and on the kind of content that would be suitable for it. They then prepared note-headings before taking it in turns to deliver their efforts to the group as a whole. Jackie's, which may be heard as **Tape Extract 8,** went like this:

Jackie Talking about her dog Kim

I think the most important thing is taking the dog out and when you take her out, should take her out for at least half an hour and take her — um — not just up the road but down to a park or something and — um — to make — um — her healthy and that — um —. Should take her out every morning, every — um — afternoon you come home from school, every — um — dinner time take her out and at night when you come home from school and at night just before you go to your bed . . . and — um — when you feed him you should feed your dog — um — well . . . you should feed her every single time you have a meal and — um — make it enjoyable for her, like — um — putting things through it, — um — for hygiene — um — you should bath your dog every month, — um — comb her hair every day and throw sticks and train them, well, throw sticks and they'll take it back to you and you have to train them well . . .

When we met the following week, I was ready for a business-like session to be spent in polishing away at these first attempts and thereby elucidating some of the skills involved in talking-with-a-purpose. First, we listened to their tapes and discussed their common features. This logically led on to a consideration of ways of improving them, at which point I introduced the notion of 'drafting' and encouraged them to see this kind of self-criticism and revision as part of the normal process of preparing a presentation to an audience whether in writing, which they already knew something about, or in talk.

To direct our thinking I had prepared the Evaluation Sheet which you can see laid out below. The intention was to expose the criteria underlying a 'good' talk and then to offer guidance in working out the particular skills required on this occasion. I had been careful — I hoped — to word matters so as to make them meaningful to these pupils and to help them feel involved in a constructive, real activity, hence the idea of using the schedule so as to lead up to the giving of useful, positive 'advice' for the next draft. You will see, too, how the Guidelines concepts of 'purposes' is expressed as a request for the delivery of an overall verdict based on task success (Number 7 below).

Evaluation Sheet

		Positive	Negative
1.	**Audibility** Could you hear what he had to say, without difficulty?		
2.	**Intelligibility** Did he speak clearly, or did you have any problems in picking up what he was saying?		
3.	**Delivery and Pace** Did he speak with life and feeling or was he montonous and sounded as if he wasn't interested in what he had to say? Did he speak too quickly or too slowly?		
4.	**Fluency** Did he keep the talk going or were there awkward gaps and hesitations?		
5.	**Content** a) Information Did he tell you what you needed to know about the topic or did he leave you unsure about anything? b) Interest Did he manage to include any interesting experiences, anecdotes or points — or was his talk simply one dull fact after another?		

Evaluation Sheet (Continued)

Positive **Negative**

6. **Organisation and Clarity**

Did he begin well, in a way that got your attention?

Did he end well, on a strong, concluding note?

Did he keep to the point, or did he get lost in digressions and perhaps even repeat himself?

Did the talk hang together or did he seem to jump from one point to another?

---

7. **Impact**

Your overall verdict!

Did the speaker succeed in what he set out to do?

Was your interest held?

Did you find the talk informative?

Was it amusing or lively?

Write down any comment that sums up your impression of the talk as a whole.

---

8. **Advice to the Speaker**

Take another look at your 'positive/negative' grading.

What do you think are the most important points for the Speaker to bear in mind for next time?

The teaching hopes that lay behind these efforts appeared to be on their way towards a smooth realisation as the group found plenty to say about what they were quite ready to see as 'first attempts'. Jackie herself quickly focused, as I hoped she would, on Point 6 and criticised the way in which her talk had run different topics like exercise, feeding, hygiene together. She also nominated 'beginnings' and 'endings' as glaring weaknesses and undertook next time round to offer her listeners some introduction as to what she intended to talk about, to sum things up properly at the end, to insert pointers ('The first . . . next . . . so we can see') to guide them through it. She also promised to attend to 'Delivery and Pace', she herself pointing out the value of giving shape and emphasis by pausing between talk sections and giving the appropriate intonation.

She and the group were given some twenty five minutes to prepare a second version and to do so by setting out clear and properly laid out notes, by consulting books in the library and by discussing problems and intentions with myself or with a student teacher who was also helping with this session. Above all, they were asked to incorporate the lessons learned in our evaluative discussions.

The conditions then were very favourable for a real improvement to be shown by Jackie's second attempt below (to be heard on **Tape Extract 9**).

ADVICE ON A DOG

When you choose a dog you should make sure that it's healthy, that there's nothing wrong with it, that there's not a disease or anything and um . . . if you . . . er . . . when, er if you're singer single you should, you should take quite a big dog, um because you have more time for it and it's better to feed it, you'll have more to feed and that but if you've got a big family you're better to take a little dog like Russell's . . . (laughter) . . . because you won't have time for it if you've got children and they're easier to feed and for little dogs money, doesn't cost so much but if you're single you have enough money to make for a bigger dog, you should take it out for walks um and feed it regularly and that's all I have to say about dogs.

In the result it is difficult to know to what degree 'Advice on a Dog' represents improvement. Certainly, very little of what had been discussed beforehand has found its way into Jackie's talk — 'organisation' is translated into the need to concentrate on one topic at a time (mostly, the procuring of the dog), while 'beginnings' and 'endings' receive the meagre treatment of the brief title and the abrupt rounding off (the bell that you can hear has no bearing on this — it does not mark the end of this double session). This second version does suggest the foreshadowings of a general improvement perhaps in that its speaker does show some awareness of the need to generalise her message, to deliver it in a more authoritative, 'public' voice. But really, such relative judgment is limited. The point is that what we have here is not so much a second version as a completely **different** talk.

The reason lies not, I am assured, in any slowness or lack of co-operation on the pupil's part but in the fact that 'drafting' is a very difficult concept to apply to talk. Partly, and most obviously, this is because speech is fugitive both in practice and in its very nature. Despite the recording, Jackie does not really perceive her first attempt as a draft, a thing she can hold while she builds improvement on to it. To her it has been an event, and now that it is past it is no longer there. It cannot be changed, only replaced.

The second, and I think larger reason for her behaviour is that to her, talk, anyone's talk, is the expression not so much of a topic as a relationship, a point of human contact between speaker and listener. It has been difficult for Jackie to see her first talk as a thing, external to herself and ready to be worked on for the benefit of some postulated 'purpose' that will be implemented upon the abstract 'listener'.

No doubt we could have played the drafting game somewhat harder than we did, could have listened again (and again) to that original tape, could have extracted some order from it and coached a well-paced, competently-delivered (but probably devitalised) talk out of her. But this, as that 'coaching' implies, would have been training for a particular set performance rather than helping her towards insights into the nature of effective oral communication. And we are, after all, teachers not producers.

The implication is that the drafting model has been imposed too early, or at least too quickly, upon this young pupil. This is not to say that there is no evidence at all of some development in what she has done, for there are signs in her second attempt of a dawning awareness of talk as a means of informing a range of possible viewpoints, that her audience may need advice on relating choice of dog to domestic circumstances different from her own. This, however, is more a matter of widening perception than of skills acquisition and suggests that 'improvement' for Jackie will be the fruit of a maturing oral experience, nourished by the ample opportunity to involve herself in a variety of talk and listening rather than the single-minded reworking of a few set oral assignments.

All talk will depend upon our ability to engage with the pupil speaker's perceptions that exist at a level deeper than that of overt performance. Certainly the time will come when it will be profitable to work directly with the pupil on a particular oral production, but it might be best if this were treated as the culmination of her growing awareness of the need to talk with sufficient mastery of oral technique to satisfy particular audience needs. The seedbed for such growth will be the kind of audiences — and gradual tightening of audience demand — that we can provide for her in the classroom. Jackie might have been better led towards her 'advice' by answering queries from her listeners, or by being given the role of demonstrating aspects of pet care to us, perhaps by picture, if not through the actual Kim. The argument is that talk will mature primarily by developing the relationships of which it is such a vital expression.

If we are to look for the source of 'good' talk in the case of Jackie, there is no doubt that we will find it in her own capacity to deal effectively with those less formal situations where she feels able to strike a rapport with a personal audience. Despite her assertion at the end of Extract 9, once she had sat down again and started to answer a question or two about her talk, it became clear that she had any amount of material still to offer. I therefore asked her for yet another talk but said that this time she was simply to tell us about her own Kim and could do so sitting down amongst the group. After one nervous false start, she produced **Tape Extract 10.**

My dog's name is Kim and she she's a good dog, she's friendly and she she barks at men that come in at the door and when there's parties she always gets put out because when she wags her tail she knocks all the drinks off the table and um . . . she runs out when we're putting out the bucket and um she just runs about places she's not supoosed to do the toilet where the kids play and um one time she got picked up by the dog um warden and we had to ging down and collect her and cost us £7 and when she sleeps she comes up to my room and she just sleeps like me, she puts her head on the pillows and she likes the covers over her and she um it's difficult to get to sleep because she takes about two hours before she falls asleep and she she moves about, she licks you and everything and um . . . she's golden and she um likes um Chunkie with Winalot through it and she likes Bounce um and Chum; she likes going down to the Stewart Park and running about and chasing all other dogs and playing with them but when she gets into fights, she's vicious in fights and one time my brother was walking back an old man um tried to scare my brother and the dog attacked him and bit his hand, he jist talked awa um . . . she . . . that dog she the lady said 'D' you see that dog', and it was her dog that come up to my dog so my dog just about killed it . . . that's really all about her.

This time she is able to speak with a vividness that springs from her involvement — in the topic itself, obviously, but also, I think, in the reality of what she now finds herself doing: talking to an intimate group, who have already chatted about Thurber's Rex, about their pets and about **her** dog. The result is that she is able to offer them, and to know that she is offering them, a vivid oral snapshot of Kim.

Her talk on this occasion is vitalised by the relationship it enables her to enjoy with her listener and indeed is merged with it, for even after her speech has 'stopped' and the discussion with the group and myself been resumed, she continues to come out with fresh description, as we can now hear in **Tape Extract 11.** (A part transcript is provided on the next page.

T. *I should imagine if uh is that she's just as friendly as you say when you're brother comes home from London he's going to get knocked off his feet . . .'*

J. *. . . well my other brother Stuart he's in the army when he comes home she's just as bad, my nephew she tries to climb on his back and before when he was um just about coming over he used to walk about and everything she used to growl at him but now she's used to him and she's really good to him and anybody who touched him like my dad who . . . when he was little, ken, just about a couple of months, my mum, my dad used to talk to him to my dog, is just to make sure he did him no harm, he used to go right between me, my dad and the bairn but she lets me touch him.*

T. *So she's quite protective and if I were to attack you in front of this dog what would happen to me?*

J. *She'd kill you!*

(general group chat)

T. *That was an interesting talk I thought . . .*

J. *She is protective.*

T. *She is protective.*

J. *Ah, ah but she's friendly.*

T. *Ah, ah*

J. *If she knows you. My sister as well she just about got knocked off her feet as well but she's really protective to my nephew won't let anybody harm him.*

T. *Uh, hu. Quite gentle with children?*

J. *Mm, mm she is . . .*

T. *Quite small children?*

J. *If she knows them but if she, if there's a little kid that comes in and just climbs all over everything then she might turn on him and that's what my mother's scared about it. Anybody that's, well it's OK for my mum to smack my nephew if he's done something wrong but . . . ken . . . just a tap on the fingers and she wouldn't go for her then but if somebody came in the house, right say a babysnatcher or something . . . if he came into the house and Kim was down at my sister-in-law's, she'd probably kill him . . . She's quite vicious that way.*

T. *Sounds very similar to Rex in many ways. I would imagine that if somebody attacked James Thurber that would be about the last thing that person ever did . . . er Rex would grab hold and never let go, yeah?*

J. *Well there was one time . . . there was somebody knocking at the door and shouting and everything and I was in on my own about half an hour and my mum was away for a message and the dog went down to the door. She moved the curtain with her nose and she started growling and barking and I never heard anything like that ever again and that was about 3 year ago and the man run a mile.*

T. *Very fierce was it . . .?*

J. *Uh, Hu . . . she was taking up her . . . and she smiles at you, if you came in she takes up her skin, she smiles and grins at you . . . she . . . it looks as if she's going to bite you but she smiles at you . . .*

The relative success with which Jackie has spoken informally about her Kim might lead to the conclusion that what she and other pupils are naturally good at is certain **types** of talk only. Here she has shown that she can use talk to share a personal experience (GRC Purpose 3) but finds difficulty in fulfilling a more specific purpose like 'conveying information', and needs to be taught how to do so. She has demonstrated that she can talk as part of a close speaker-listener relationship but must now — the argument might continue — learn how to tackle those situations where the 'audience' is the more generalised one of, say, 'information-receivers'. Or, to put it in the way that some linguists would, Jackie is already, like almost all pupils, able to handle 'relationship' or 'listener-centred' talk but is as yet untutored in those forms which have their centre in the 'task'.

I wonder, however, whether we are really able to make distinctions of this sort, dispensing with the listener relationship as a personal felt experience for some oral situations while retaining it for others. The question that has to be asked here is what exactly is 'Talk'? Is it really so explicit, so much a production, so conforming to notions of genre and task that we can make teaching categories out of it? Analytical conveniences such as 'Grade Related Criteria', 'messages' and 'purposes' may lead us to suppose that Talk, in sophisticated, to-be-taught manifestations at least, is external, context-free and able, like Writing, to achieve a universality of meaning that raises it above a dependency upon the situation that produces it.

The truth is rather that in any talk the audience is inescapably there in a way that the 'reader' cannot be; that there must always be a degree of 'experience-sharing', of seeking to create an immediate relationship, whatever the purpose. And, unless he is playing a very specialised role indeed, the listener will 'judge' the quality of the oral offering in similarly personal terms. He will 'respond', not merely receive; will ask that the talk 'involves' him and does not simply fulfil a purpose. He will also be inclined to judge it, not analytically and with attention to precise detail, but as a whole, in terms of the 'impact' it has upon him. This is why, despite its repetitions and lack of serial organisation, Jackie's later talk achieves success as a verbal portrait, because, as it flows on, it involves us in a vivid experiencing of her interest in her dog.

The first teaching point to make is that we should value such talk sufficiently to give it classroom expression and that we should not confine our oral syllabus to separate treatment of rehearsed performances. But this example carries a further and even more productive implication for our teaching methods. As we listen to the later stages of Jackie's conversation we can witness her actually beginning to achieve the kind of 'explicitness' that is the defining feature of the message or task-centred talk. Notice, for example, how she picks up a term that has been used earlier, 'protective', muses over it while the rest of the group chat on and then returns to develop it into what is now emerging as a sense of her own ability to proffer a definition of the type of dog her Kim is and of how other people might view and regard her. Indeed the urge to clarify this quality for her listener becomes strong enough for her to shape what follows round it (and for her to brush aside the teacher's intrusive attempts to praise her efforts!). Anecdotes are still the staple feature but now appear as the evidence that enables the listener to appreciate the kind of dog Kim really is, while her talk rises to a genuinely vivid touch of description at the end of our extract as she strives to find the words to create a picture that will do justice to her subject. But — the important teaching point — Jackie has achieved this by entering ever more intensely into a relationship with her audience: the need to become more precise, to use examples and to turn that 'protective' into a defining characteristic, has come from her desire to communicate with an audience, and not from any perception of a task to be accomplished.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Our teaching conclusions therefore are these:

1. An 'English teaching model' based on a writing-derived pattern of drafting is certainly useful but is chiefly so when working at the later stages in the production of a piece of classroom talk.

2. A formative assessment approach remains the basis of oral work but in Talk is best understood as referring to a developmental process in which the teaching focus must initially be on what surrounds the speech event rather than upon a reworking of it. In all language communication considerations such as clarification of meaning, definition of purpose, style of presentation, are fundamental but whereas in writing it is possible to retrieve the thought processes that went into its production through the visible evidence on the page, in talk it is not. Attention must therefore, in the first place, be upon the messenger and his audience rather than the message itself.

3. We must attend to those factors that generate talk and which give it its shape. These lie in 'relationships' and 'situations' as much as in 'tasks' and 'purposes'. Talk development is most likely to occur if the pupil is put in the position of acting, — and coming to see himself as so acting — as an explainer, an instructor, a persuader, and a sharer of experience with a real listener. The listener should initially be in a sufficiently close relationship to impress upon the speaker the need to speak effectively enough to satisfy the demands of an 'audience'. It is only when the purposes of explanation, persuasion, narration, and so on, have emerged that the support of a listener-partner may be removed and effort given to the independent, conscious perfecting of the talk. It is at this later point that our Chapter 2 model will come into play.

4. The teaching strategy that now emerges is founded on the view that pupil talk is rooted in the conversational, where communication is informal, unplanned, is a shared experience, and is an interplay between partners. This suggests the following teaching movement, which, although a continuum, may be schematised thus:—

Informal on open topic, unstructured	:	casual exchange; no destination; social channels open; to fellow speaker.
Informal on specific topic, unstructured	:	sense of direction; awareness of outcome; between equals; speaker-listener partnership.
Formal on specific topic, unstructured	:	offering information, ideas etc; towards an aim; to a listener, possibly as unequals.
Formal on specific topic, structured	:	satisfying expections, meeting demands; fulfilling set purpose; presentation and rules-following important; to an audience.

5. The syllabus as a whole must be conducted so as to provide opportunity for the pupil to experience a range of speaker-listener activities. This has implications for matters such as unit design, group work and teacher-pupil relationships; the need to place oral work in the context of the curriculum as a whole will be returned to in our final chapter.

6. Above all, it is important to remember that Talk is a less tidy and accountable process than the other language modes. Teaching must be sensitive, flexible and to some extent opportunistic — any planned attempt to improve it is liable to be facile and superficial.

A Final Point

This argument gives the English teacher a vital responsibility in ensuring that he utilises the resources of the syllabus and the classroom as a whole to provide the appropriate talk-listener relationships for his pupils. To some extent fellow pupils, group participation, activities involving communication with outsiders, visitors and the community as a whole will serve this purpose, but a vital role must be that served by the teacher since it is the interaction between teacher and pupils that can best lead them from the conversational to the fulfilment of some formal purpose.

Several of our later Tape Extracts allow us to hear this process in action and will therefore relate back to this crucial point. One of the most vivid in this respect is **Tape Extract No. 22** (Chapter 8), an example of a teacher talking with a group of 'Foundation course' pupils about an incident in **Kes** by Barry Hines. What could have been a forbiddingly formal interview has been treated as an opportunity to share and to sort out reactions. Yet although the encounter has its grounding in the tones and rhythms of personal conversation, the teacher is continually asking the pupils to specify and to substantiate, helping them to reach out towards a more structured account. Yet this is done as much by the talk relationship he enters into as by the content of his questioning. the encouragement which he displays as the boys feel their way towards clarity is as notable as his understanding of the exact amount of support to offer them. Notice how often he leads them towards a fuller explanation by a suggestion or a further query, rather than the direct demand. And it is these qualities that, in their turn, direct the pupils' growing perception of their role in this dialogue as a source of information and comment for a listener who genuinely values what they have to say.

A. A DETAILED EXAMPLE: ONE-TO-ONE TALK

The number of speech activities and teaching procedures that might accompany them is vast, a reflection of the great range of registers and style that could be included in any syllabus that aspires to offer coverage of the oral experiences to be encountered in personal and social life. Some notice of the corresponding variety of teaching techniques now becoming available is given in the quick review of 'Specific Suggestions' that rounds off this chapter.

In order to provide a more thorough discussion it will be convenient, however, to follow the simplification suggested in Chapter 3 and thus to exemplify three broad areas: solo to audience; one-to-one; group talk.

Indeed, this section can be kept relatively brief since I have discussed the first of this trio at some length, both in Chapter 2 and the main part of this one, while 'group talk' is a large enough topic to warrant the separate treatment that it receives as Chapter 7. This leaves me to deal with one-to-one talk, to which I now proceed.

As with solo-audience talk, the starting question must be: to what extent will a general 'English Teaching' strategy enable the pupil to improve his performance in this area? Here I should like to draw on a piece of investigative work done by Jim Duffin of Our Lady's High School, Motherwell.

Jim Duffin's work has taken the form of a sequence of teaching with a pair of S3 'Foundation' boys, designed to test the applicability of a formative assessment approach to the improvement of pupil work in interviewing, a prime example of one-to-one talk. His pupils were led through a sequence of activities, arranged in clear first draft-review-second draft stages — a pattern clearly compatible with the standard 'English Teaching Model' proposed in Chapter 2. Indeed, we may express it in similar terms:

AIM	Competence in Talk
PURPOSE	Talking to seek information, share experience ('Enquiry')
TASK	Pair of pupils carry out interview between themselves on topic of 'football'.
FIRST ATTEMPT, by Pupils	Introductory discussion of approach and problems with teacher; notes drawn up; first try out, tape; play back.
REVIEW and FURTHER ATTEMPTS (with teacher collaboration)	Further discussion of skills demanded, especially need for open questioning, 'natural' informal tone, responding to interviewee answers in order to achieve genuine rapport.
FINAL VERSION	Interview on tape.

A complete account would make interesting but over-lengthy reading — all that can be done here is to offer some notes on what occurred at each of the basic learning-performance stages together with some extracts from the long and fascinating tape that was produced — the recorded highlights in fact. To do this it will be convenient to refer to the three stages of Before the Interview — Interview Draft 1 — Interview Draft 2.

1: Before the Interview

On **Tape Extract 12**, you will catch part of a lengthy discussion between the two pupils and their teacher in which they work towards an articulation of the general interviewing skills that the boys will have to employ if they are to produce an authentic and worthwhile result. A transcript of this extract follows:

Teacher	*Right, fair enough. Would you want the answers to be very short or longer or what?*
John	*Longer.*
Teacher	*Uh Huh. so would that tell you anything about the kind of question that you should ask?*
John	*Not a 'Yes/No' question.*
Gary	*'Yes/No' or short . . . but . . . fairly long.*
Teacher	*Right, so you would want to ask a question that would give him the chance not to just say 'Yes' or 'No' but to say a bit more than that. O.K.*
John	*Just like trying to put two questions into the one question if you know what I mean . . . like saying, "What part of Britain did you go for your holiday. Or wherever you went, whereabouts is it?" and all that.*
Teacher	*Uh Huh. So you would be trying to give him what? — in the question you ask . . . you would be trying to*
John	*Trying to give him . . . comfort?*
Teacher	*Uh huh. Possibly. That's an interesting thing to say, to 'give him comfort'.*

Gary	***Relax him.***
Teacher	***Relax him. How would you want to make him feel about your attitude?***
John	*You would want him to feel that . . . the way that you were going on . . . that it was quite good . . . not just coming straight out with it . . . just talk him into the questions. If you don't, he's just going to fumble about and it'll not look . . . sound very good on tape, he'll have to do it over and over again.*
Teacher	*Right. How do you think you should react to what he says? If you're an interviewer and you ask him a question and he tells you something, how do you think you should react to that?*
John	*Just sort of normal. Just . . . if you think you've got another question out of what he's just already told you, just ask him that and not just ask him the other question on your list.*
Teacher	*Uh huh. fine. But as well as asking him questions, is there anything else you should perhaps try to do after he answers a question or says something to you?*
John	*Ask him to explain it . . . what he means.*
Teacher	*Now . . . that's good. when would you do that or why would you do that?*
Gary	*When you don't understand what he's meaning . . . you ask him to explain it.*
Teacher	*Right. If it's not clear . . . you can't understand it . . . or you might think what . . . What might you think when you hear that answer?*
John	*That he's not sort of . . . explained it too well . . .*
Gary	*. . . expressed it . . .*
Teacher	*Uh huh.*
John	*If he says that when he was growing up he lived in a slum you would ask him, "What was it like? Could you please explain it?"*
Teacher	*Right, fair enough. So you would ask him for more information if you felt there was more that he could say about this. Yes, good. Eh . . . you've said a few times that you'd want the person being interviewed to feel relaxed, feel at ease, and I think that he's more likely to feel at ease if he thinks that you, the interviewer, are quite interested in what he has to say. How would you show him that?*
John	*Sort of 'sweet-talk' him into it.*
Teacher	*Now that's an interesting phrase. What do you mean by that?*
John	*Sort of just . . . talk normal to him, not come straight out with questions, just start chatting away to him, and before the person that's interviewing . . . person that's getting interviewed knows it, he's answered some questions.*
Gary	*Like if he's a . . . interviewer's talking to him like as if he's the boy's — a normal day pal saying questions to him. That's 'em . . . he's getting all the action talking to him.*
Teacher	*Right, so speak like a normal person to him — like his pal, not perhaps, like an interviewer at all. O.K. Now how about the person being interviewed? We've really been talking, so far, about the interviewer, and how he could do a good job. How would the person being interviewed make the interview good?*

Even in this excerpt we have enough to see the value of attaching the teaching of oral skills to a real and soon-to-be attempted task for, under its pressure, the teacher is able to lead his pupils to a realisation of the qualities that they must attempt: here the crucial matter of conversational naturalness, to be achieved by open question-asking, by establishing a relaxed and supportive tone, by showing flexibility in question-posing and a readiness to build on answers. What is especially striking is the degree of insight these pupils — lower set, remember — are able to display, often in a quite felicitous way ('comfort', 'sweet-talk'). That they will appreciate the danger of unnatural, stilted interrogation is clearly shown in their explanation that the interviewer must refrain from 'Yes/No questions', must not work mechanically through a prepared list, must develop a genuinely discursive format by showing interest and encouraging the speaker into further elaboration.

2: Interview Draft 1

Interviewing to this order of easy-sounding accomplishment is quite a feat and it is not surprising that the first attempt falls short of these aspirations. It will be sufficient to play a brief extract **(Tape Extract 13).**

John	*. . . football, and what do you like about it?*
Gary	*Well I like football a lot, because I think I have got the skill to play football.*
John	*What do you like about it when you're watching games, matches and that?*
Gary	*I think it is very exciting, looking at all the new players and how they play football.*

John	*Do you go to a lot of games, and what games do you go to?*
Gary	*Well I go to a lot of games in Motherwell.*
John	*Any other games?*
Gary	*I've been to a couple of Celtic matches, but it's too much money to go to them.*
John	*Ah . . . what team do you support?*
Gary	*. . . Celtic.*
John	*What player in Celtic do you like the best?*
Gary	*Davie Provan.*
John	*Is he a good player?*
Gary	*Yes — exciting player.*
John	*What position does he play?*
Gary	*Eh . . . it's a forward position I think it is.*
John	*Oh I've heard of that player. He's quite good I hear. What is your home town — home team?*
Gary	*Eh — Motherwell.*
John	*Do you like Motherwell?*
Gary	*Well, they're an exciting team to watch.*
John	*Do you play football yourself?*
Gary	*Yes, I play football myself a lot.*
John	*Do you think you are any good at it?*

As is apparent, the interview is everything that John and Gary said it should not be: stilted, staccato, a firing off of a volley of unconsidered conversation shots in the hope of firing some lengthy, interesting response. In particular, John, who showed such a fine appreciation of the interviewer's role, finds it difficult in practice to move out of his own predetermined questioning line. He passes up several opportunities to build on a reply, sticks to the severely factual and actually traps Gary into repeating a point (his own playing) because of his anxiety to follow his script!

In the teacher-pupil appraisal that follows, the two pupils once again show clear awareness of the real requirements of the situation, and of their own failure to perform to them. The teacher has no difficulty in leading them to identify the weaknesses, and, in particular, to the realisation that they had attacked the situation in the wrong way, by 'over-scripting' it to a degree that made it impossible to develop the rhythm and expansiveness of a real discussion. Their grasp of this central flaw can be indicated by the brief **Tape Extract 13,** (continued) transcript below:—

Gary	*Sir, because it was the first time, you were nervous and that — it was all wrote down in your jotter.*
Teacher	*So you feel now that . . . because you know this is going to be used and that other teachers are, perhaps, going to hear it, that you could put a lot more into it? You talked a minute ago there Gary about having the questions or the answers written down in a book. Did you have your answers written down?*
Gary	*Yes sir, we had them all written down. Before we came out to talk we'd them all written down, so I gave them to John and John . . . gave them . . . I read them first and John said what we're going to do . . . I knew what I was going to do.*
Teacher	*Do you think it was a good idea to have the answers written down John?*
John	*Sir because . . . when . . . if you ask the question . . . one certain question . . you've got the answer written down . . . and you've no other way of telling him what's going to do, but if you've not written them down and you know the questions, you get a rough idea of what you're going to answer, you just say what's coming into your head, just say . . . it might be more interesting than what's going to happen.*
Teacher	*Right . . . so you might think of something better to say? And how does it sound when you're actually reading out something that you've got written down.*
John	*Sir it sounds sort of different.*
Gary	*Sir you know what he's going to ask you, you've got the answer there — you just look at the book and say, well . . . the answer's there for you, sir, instead of when he gives you the question you just give the answer — not the answer that's on the book — give him some of the answer that's on the book and some of the answer that's in your head.*
Teacher	*Right. And it maybe sounds more . . . what, if you're not reading it or it sounds more . . .?*

John	*Dull.*
Teacher	*Do you think it sounds more dull if you're reading it or if you're not reading it?*
John	*If you're reading it, it sounds more dull.*
Teacher	*Uh huh. Why is that?*
John	*Sir, because you're just reading straight off paper . . . but if you're reading straight out your mind it'll sound more interesting.*

3: Interview Draft 2

The resulting attempt to apply these lessons may be sampled in **Tape Extract 14,** transcript below.

John	*Good evening. My name is John Donnachie and I am here to interview Mr. Brown. Hello Mr. Brown.*
Gary	*Good evening Mr. Donnachie.*
John	*I've brought you here to ask you about football.*
Gary	*Yes, I know, because of the letter you sent me.*
John	*What team do you support?*
Gary	*I support Celtic Mr. Donnachie.*
John	*Why?*
Gary	*Well, I think it is an interesting team.*
John	*Well, I stick to my home team, myself — Motherwell, but Celtic are a good team, aren't they?*
Gary	*Yes*
John	*I don't really prefer them to Motherwell, if you know what I mean. How long have you supported that . . . eh, Celtic?*
Gary	*I've supported Celtic now for about two years.*
John	*Well, I've liked Celtic for a long time, but I've supported Motherwell, oh — most of my life. I've been to quite a few matches. Who do you like best in the team?*
Gary	*I like Davie Provan the best.*
John	*Why?*
Gary	*He's an exciting player and he's good with the ball.*

This extract, brief though it is, might be enough to show us the strengths of a direct formative assessment approach when applied to Talk — and also, I think, some of the attendant uncertainties. In this 'second' interview it is quite clear that only one of the pupils does manage to inject into it the kind of conversational tone that both had identified as desirable when discussing the matter with their teacher. While John does try very hard to turn his questioning into less of an interrogation and to offer real support to his interviewee, Gary still finds it difficult to reciprocate, in fact seems to become, if anything, more inhibited; indeed even John, one suspects, is being a little too self-consciously diligent in his attempt to sustain informality.

The result is that the interview still comes over as rather strained, the pupils' gain in skill difficult to assess. This is for reasons to do with the kind of thing that Talk is since it is likely that in a process like interviewing, it is not easy to be certain that improvement will always be the consequence when we ask the practitioners to make a detailed examination and deliberate reworking of what should be a personal conversational inter-relationship.

All this suggests, I think, that while the focus and the hard practice achieved by a formalised bout of drafting work does have a role to play, it can only be seen as part of a whole syllabus of talk opportunities in which pupils are given the chance to use enquiry forms of speech as a normal part of their English classroom experience, and thus to grow into the role of question-posing and answering over a period of time. As with Jackie, these two pupils must be given the time and the sustenance to develop as interviewers, as creators of talk, their own talk.

B. SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

What ought, ideally, to be a very lengthy section will have to be kept as a brief series of notes, partly because of limitations of space, but also because the diversity of approaches and specific activities that might comprise an oral methodology really require the kind of full-scale treatment that will have to be given to it in another, and less summary publication than this one has to be — indeed, **several** other publications, since the topic involves practical issues and experiences that might best be dealt with through the appearance of individual accounts of local initiatives and actual school practices of the type suggested earlier in the 'Preface'.

All that we feel able to do here is to make a note-form report of some of the ideas that we have encountered in schools throughout the country and to offer them as methods which seem worth bringing to your attention, both because some schools have already had success in using them and also because, taken together, their diversity and range could provide a major contribution to the making up of a repertoire of classroom strategies for the teaching of oral work.

1. **Speech Games:** Some schools have experimented with a variety of 'games' which have the advantage of providing a stimulating yet structured framework in which pupils may lose their inhibitions in meeting the challenge of satisfying a particular set of rules, and, frequently, in taking on a special role in order to do so. Games may enable the teaching to focus on specific skills and also draw upon talk models that pupils are familiar with from their appearance on television and radio. Obviously they are open to the criticism that they are too contrived to reflect 'real' situations but if carefully planned they may well express genuine talk purposes as well as enliven the syllabus.

Among the examples we encountered were activities designed to encourage quite specific and basic skills such as the ability to recall accurately, to order and to deliver subject-matter logically and clearly, to give concise instructions and so on. Thus, at Linksfield Academy, Aberdeen, pupils might be asked to go through an incline of tasks ranging from the memorising and accurate recall of lists of 10 objects (a kind of aural 'Kim's Game'), through the ordering of lists of events of instructions into correct time or logic sequences, up to the devising and conveying of oral rules for the playing of a game.

Other activities noted elsewhere were, for Listening: asking pupils to draw maps or diagrams based on oral instructions; following directions; where essential information has been omitted, to decide what the 'original' version is, or at least which questions to ask of the speaker (aural cloze?). And for Talk: predicting ends of stories; describing unfamiliar objects such as a piece of fishing tackle, a bit of flotsam; comparing two versions of something such as an old with a current map, one newspaper account of last night's match with another; devising, say, 5 questions to ask on a topic to be answered by another group. Attempts have also been made to adapt well known panel games such as **Screen Test** (either with film or spoken account), **Call My Bluff,** and **20 Questions,** as well as the more serious **Any Questions?**

One school that does make sustained use of 'games' amongst the variety of oral activities employed by it is The Berwickshire High School. Its regular 'Balloon Games' are a good example of the way in which a lively oral challenge may be exploited to sharpen pupils' application of the need for certain skills and also to provide the opportunity for some very pointed, yet relaxed, assessment in simple terms of win/lose (did he fulfil the speech purpose embodied in the game, that is of speaking persuasively enough to convince that he should 'survive'?) Here pupils in groups of 4 or 5 draw by lot the name of a profession and are then asked to prepare a case to defend their particular job as being of more importance than the rest, and therefore themselves as being worthy of survival in the sinking balloon.

2. **Video-work:** Some establishments have managed to acquire portable, easy-to-operate video equipment with which to make up and shoot their own programmes. Such schools speak enthusiastically about the opportunity such enterprises create not only for scripting and acting but also for using the range of oral and listening skills necessary to collaborate on the working through of the full sequence of activity required to take a video-taped presentation through from initial discussion and selection of ideas to final voice-over introduction and commentary.

The case for video work in the classroom has been extensively made by Carol Lorac and Michael Weiss in **Communication and Social Skills** (Schools Council Communication and Social Skills Project), Wheaton, 1981; but a lively report is to be found in Linda Watson's article on her experiences in this field at Mearns Academy, Laurencekirk, Grampian in **Grampian English Views,** Volume 5, Number 2, 1982.

3. **Role-play:** Many teachers are finding it helpful to use role-play and improvisation as oral learning experiences. There is a danger in this in that indiscriminate usage may lead to theatrical values entering the teaching and assessment process in a distracting fashion, so that all oral categories become a subspecies of the 'Entertainment' purpose and the criterion for pupil success and his perception of where the true nature of the oral task lies blur into the general excitement of generating a colourful piece of theatrical caricature. But employed at the right time, and that must be as a stage in the working out of the skills necessary for the tackling of some particular talk or listening demand, role-play could make a valuable contribution to the general formative process of shaping the relevant skill. By taking the pupil out of himself and into a specific part, we may be helping him to focus more clearly on particular communication problems by thus forcing him to see the oral situation as a producer of it. Equally important is the psychological benefit to be gained by liberating the pupil from personal inhibitions. There will be many who will find their voice more easily by first seeking refuge in the assumed speech of another.

Thus, to cite one of the many examples we found, one school thought it helpful to teach 'Information' talk through the device of the 'helpful neighbour' who acts the part of the friendly local, briefing the next-door newcomer on the whereabouts and whyfors of the locality, while many others have long since been arranging mock-interviews for jobs and rigged up internal telephone calls to practise in the 'Enquiry' area.

4. **Real-life Activity:** It is best not to be satisfied with simulation alone, and many schools try to work into their classroom programme real talk and listening encounters. These might range in complexity from running a message from the teacher to the School Office (pre-arranged by both parties — as at Auchmuty, Glenrothes), to interviewing the Bishop for an article in the school magazine (as at St Saviour's, Dundee), to undertaking the range of tasks necessary to the arranging of a class trip. At Achtercairn, Gairloch, Highland, pupils go

on a weekend visit to the Elphin Outdoor Centre near Lochinver and are asked to relay messages from the Tourist Office, deliver directions as to how to get there, discuss the itinerary, make enquiries of tourist board officials, offer proposals as to what to do when they get there, carry out a dramatic recreation of a scene of local history, script up commentary for a subsequent tape-slide programme — and discuss the menu! St Modan's H.S., Stirling provides another striking example of the way in which the 'real' oral resources of a school may be utilised. Here pupils are to be found interviewing members of staff (whose combined experiences and philosophies must constitute an enormous teaching resource, surely) on their opinions on current issues, or their memories of the Second World War — and so on.

5. **The Oral Project:** The Achtercairn example shows how Talk may become a planne part of any cycle of work. Some examples have emerged of a whole unit in which the primary focus is on speech. At Westhill Academy, near Aberdeen, each pupil before the end of the second year will have worked through one 'oral project' in which, for example, he has made up and committed to tape a radio magazine-pop programme or an extended news bulletin.

6. **Peer and Self-Evaluation:** In Grampian, some recent, interesting work has been carried out in several schools by Mrs Annie Inglis, ex Speech and Drama, Aberdeen College of Education. Among the range of techniques used in order to stimulate involvement and critical interest in oral work among pupils, her use of peer assessment has been found to be particularly promising. Most typically this has taken the form of a group presentation of views on, say, a popular television programme such as **Grange Hill** or **The Young Ones** before an audience of fellow pupils who are then asked to apply previously discussed criteria to the writing up of evaluated reports, complete with graded verdict. A fuller report of what has had to be summarised here in the broadest of fashions will no doubt appear in due course and will be worth reading, if the enthusiasm of the teachers with whom she has worked is any guide.

7. **Technology:** Undoubtedly, advances in this area will offer new possibilities even to the extent of transforming the teaching and assessment of oral work — before the first batch of 'Munn and Dunning' pupils receive their 'Standards' too. The field is so large, and is developing so fast, that we can make only the briefest of acknowledgements to two particular possibilities for classroom usage: the potential that the micro-computer may offer especially in its word-processing and problem-solving games functions, to stimulate and focus talk — group as well as individual; the occasional facility for intensive individual work that the School Language Laboratory may offer. Information on the first is beginning to appear in a variety of issues of publications, not least articles in recent (1982-83) numbers of **Teaching English.** Celia Craig of Westhill has done some thorough work on preparing assessment tasks to be mediated through her school's Language Laboratory and has written a useful report in **Grampian English Views,** December, 1981.

8. **Radio and Television:** It is worth reminding ourselves of teaching and stimulus material available through programmes produced by the educational departments of both the BBC and ITV. This has always been so, of course, but it should also be realised that in addition to the familiar series, with all their general possibilities for enhancing pupils' discussion and listening/viewing skills, the companies are making every effort to keep up with Scottish teachers' syllabus needs as they develop. To mention just two examples: STV are producing a series of programmes, due to go out in February-March, 1984, on the topic of the Media called **Time to Think** with content and pupil support material that promises to stimulate lively, pointed discussion work; the BBC Scotland radio series **Foundation English,** put out in December, 1983, has included some very interesting listening materials involving genuinely active, interpretative response by pupils.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ORAL SYLLABUS — ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY OUTLINE

1. Assessment through Criteria: the Similarity with Writing

The current movement towards regarding assessment as an obligation on the part of the school to make ever fuller scrutiny of pupils' progress, and thus to offer evaluative information derived from 'internal' and 'criterion-referenced' sources, as well as the traditional and simpler summative test, has created new burdens for the English teacher. Because of the nature of Talk and of Listening, these demands will fall most heavily upon his attempts to make a balanced, rounded assessment of his pupils' oral work. The purpose of this chapter is to suggest an approach that will reduce these difficulties to more manageable proportions.

Partly, this simplification is to be achieved by sorting out our thinking on 'assessment' and 'oral' activity, partly by viewing evaluation in this area as a composite — and to some extent, compromise — package of information made up from a variety of sources, none of which needs to be employed very rigorously since it is through their coming together in a judicious mixing that a sensible and acceptable statement of individual achievement will be arrived at.

2. Difficulties posed by the Special Nature of Talk;

3. The Need for an Assessment Strategy for Talk

The main thrust of present-day thinking on assessment is to see it as an attempt to base judgment on a consideration of the pupil's progress as set against the demands of the subject. It is true that Talk does, by its very nature, present a range of difficulties in that it takes various forms, is interactional, is as much to do with process and personal development as the production of material that would lend itself to objective examination. Yet if we hold on to the notion of assessment as a pooling of evaluative information gained from several different sources, and not as a precise quasi-scientific measurement, then we can piece together a system sufficiently flexible and diverse to be both workable and compatible with the general aims of our oral teaching.

4. An Oral Assessment Package

Our 'strategy' should therefore be to consider each of the major, available types of assessment, to identify what each can best do and thus best contribute to an end result whose effectiveness as judgment will derive from the cross-checking variety of methods used rather than the impracticably extended application of any of them. In Section 4 we review ingredients of what we can term our 'oral assessment package' briefly appraising what each can contribute to the whole and the extent to which the inevitably hard working English teacher may be expected to pursue any one of them.

These are: (i) The summative test, a once-a-year opportunity to submit the pupil to a detailed marking-scheme-supported examination of performance as evinced in some formal and demanding talk situation such as the solo talk (ii) In-course assessment — a logging of his success in coping with the variety of oral tasks he will have encountered during the work of the course. Evaluation here may be based on impressionistic on-the-spot observation in the form of a simple grading (iii) Personal evaluation — a running 'open-grid' informal account of the pupils' general strengths and weaknesses to be compiled as an occasional and opportunistic series of notes. The kind of moderation system being set up in response to the Guidelines' recommendations will act as a final guarantor of a system which inevitably has to depend to a large extent on individual impressionism. Such moderation, however, should be directed as much to the syllabus as a whole as to specific oral sampling, since it will be the kind of opportunity given for regular, varied oral work that will provide the final assurance of positive pupil activity.

Examples

A full set of school examples in each of these areas is given in the second part of this chapter. A final comment concludes that what this chapter has really been advocating is that to ease the assessment burden teachers should be allowed to draw upon the evidence, subjective and informal though much of it will be, already there in the day to day work of the English classroom. Obviously, this can only be so if we ensure in our syllabus design and daily teaching that Talking and Listening are as regular and valued a form of course work as are Reading and Writing.

Tape Extracts referred to: Nos. 15-17.

1. Assessment through Criteria: The Similarity with Writing

It would appear that 'assessment' has become the biggest growth area in the educational system over recent years, with results that have been both helpful and something of a burden to the English teacher. If the techniques which have been developed in the name of assessment have aided clear syllabus planning and contributed to the establishment of a more justly based account of what the individual pupil can do, it will be the accompanying demands for a full, precise programme of pupil evaluation that will perhaps strike us most forcibly. And this will be especially so for the teacher who is striving to make practical sense out of a new and tricky subject like Oral Skills.

If we could only persist with the traditional picture of assessment as an end of course examination in which success is demonstrated by the ability to carry out a set-piece performance, then the whole business would present little problem. Indeed, as my use of the word 'performance' might remind us, a clear tradition has already been established by the work of the English Speaking Board, already referred to in Chapter 1. Here, speech is measured by the degree of accomplishment shown in a diet of specialised 'pieces', reading aloud (from a work of some repute), recitation (out of a list of approved texts), the delivery of the talk, and so on. An experienced adjudicator observes this individual display at a set time and place, verdicts and marks are awarded as an act of Adjudicator expertise, an assessment procedure that works as smoothly as the young piano player's rites-of-passage through the Associated Music Board's 'Grades'.

Such an approach must, however, be rejected, for by itself it is contrived, unrelated to real tasks, is incapable of giving sensitive analysis of individual abilities, only samples a narrow range of skills and is locked into its own mystifying rituals. The limitations of the traditional summative test have been sufficiently rehearsed by now to show that on its own it is no more likely to be any more effective in oral work than in other English activities.

It is for these very reasons that secondary teachers have become involved in the current assessment drive. There are several aspects to this movement but, broadly, we can say that its direction has been away from the examination system of monolithic and normative measurement towards a more finely tuned, more informative pattern of individual evaluation. The key influence in all this has been the desire to base judgment on a broadly-ranged consideration of the pupil's progress as set against the demands of the subject itself. Consequently, our programme should be a continuous, integral part of the oral syllabus as defined by the earlier chapter on that topic. There I suggested that the English course will be organised so as to offer the pupil encounters with clearly defined speech situations and with real communication purposes. The most straightforward approach to assessing his acquisition of skills would be to view these activities as tasks, each one of which calls for a fulfilment of the appropriate purpose — a demand that entails the application of certain related skills by the pupil with clear criteria to be met.

Viewed thus, Talk should present no more of a problem than does Writing which is, after all, another expressive, personal skill. In the latter case, we appear to have worked out a way of solving the inherent assessment difficulties by using a system of individual marking which is controlled by reference to a checklist description of the required qualities ('the Marking Scheme') and moderated by a prior round of collective scrutiny of a sample of scripts ('the Markers' Meeting'). There seems, on the face of it, no reason why a parallel procedure of criteria descriptions and agreement trials — most conveniently using tapes — should not build up a corresponding amount of practical expertise and confidence in oral testing. Indeed, it was this very pattern that was the one outlined in the teaching model of Chapter 2 and demonstrated by the example of Willie's talk on rabbits.

2. Difficulties Posed by the Special Nature of Talk

However, just as the experience of actually teaching oral skills, as discussed in the case of Jackie, might persuade us to modify our approach to methodology, so our attitude towards assessment will have to take into account the special character of talk. And here several difficulties immediately spring before us:

(a) The 'criteria' assessment approach can comfortably deal with only a **small range** of oral activity. While the notion of task accomplishment readily fits in with some of the practical, everyday oral occasions listed in our oral syllabus outline in the third chapter, it will not so easily provide an answer to many of the other items, namely those which are less transactional in nature, and which express purposes that are neither explicit in performance nor tangible in outcome. Many of the conversational, experience-sharing and story-telling forms of discourse will come under this heading.

(b) Even more acutely, oral activity may be carried out in contexts which are not susceptible to clearly focused individualised scrutiny. Talk is far from being confined to the self-contained speaker address but is frequently, and most characteristically, **interactional** in both form and spirit. Only the solo-audience context would appear to be a ready candidate for criteria treatment: interviewing, enquiry, dialogue and, above all, group work are much less so.

(c) Objective, or at least controlled, measurement is only capable of taking into account well-defined, predictable events founded on clearly agreed intention. Talk is not always so task-directed as our enthusiasm for aims and objectives planning, generated by clear cut language purposes, would lead us to hope. Often speech appears as an aspect of personal behaviour that tends towards the general values of good speaker-listener relationships, to the extent that the kind of specific purposes laid out in the GRC may be considered negotiable or as mere subskills of this larger intention. In an activity like this, **where the process itself is as important as any end-product,** criteria are going to be very difficult to fix and could well become a deadly matter of trying to thrust living speech forms into tight little GRC boxes.

(d) If the judgment of talk is a goal-orientated operation, then justice will not be done to the pupil's growing ability to manage all the stages of oral maturation that lie between his natural conversational habits and the sophisticated productions esteemed by any purpose-related criteria. As was argued in Chapter 4, **talk is developmental in nature:** consequently our assessment pattern should incorporate a means of plotting the individual's overall progress as he extends his range, gradually acquires awareness of audience and register, and becomes wholly articulate. Such a system will have to employ observation and impressionistic appraisal as well as interest itself in holistic qualities such as 'verbal power' and 'fluency'. It cannot, therefore, confine itself to an examination of task-specific functions.

(e) In the background must always be the problem of management. Talk is individual and it is fleeting. The assessment of all the pupils in the class cannot be organised into a sequence of lock-step orderliness. Any approach which preoccupies itself with the amassing of evidence hard enough to withstand forensic-style investigation will turn the syllabus into a burdensome round of tape-recording and classroom audition. If we are not to set up an assessment system which will sap the energy of those who are called on to operate it and which will distort the nature of their teaching, then we must permit the informal, the opportunistic and the merely observational to give witness to oral progress.

3. The Need for an Assessment Strategy for Talk

The time-honoured examination system is gross, uninformative, narrow in its sampling and makes no attempt to match course with assessment. But it is also easy to operate, yields instant measurement and, by adhering to simplistic notions of quantification and pupil comparison, comfortably evades the complexities of any individual, criterion-based scheme. Though the old system is crude, it must be conceded that current revisions do not easily avoid the problems inherent in adapting speech development to an exactly tabulated pattern of assessment that will be both reliable **and** valid.

Oral English, perhaps English as a whole, is a complex of inter-related individual concerns and activities that do not possess any one set of clearly defined ends. If our syllabus should be working towards any final destination, then it is more likely to be some open-ended expressive ideal such as 'talking with **greater** fluency' or 'having a **more vivid** impact upon the listener', rather than any one instructional objective. Talk is, moreover, an experiential activity that comprises intractable pursuits like group discussion and experience-sharing where aesthetic and subjective values are raised. In other words, the oral syllabus deals with living processes that are practised through broad individual activities rather than the working through of a set regimen of self-contained linguistic items.

This means that the fashionable urge towards 'criteria-referencing' and 'mastery learning' must be responded to with some caution. And this will be as true of our attempts to develop a system that will describe oral development as it is of our efforts to measure task performance. It is obviously difficult to separate out criteria and arrange them in any sequential form where talk is concerned. Certainly the model of assessment-guided learning that has been so effectively worked out in a subject like French and its mastery-learning based **Tour de France** course is simply not appropriate to English except as a Foreign Language. And this for reasons which that last exception should make clear. In an external, clean-slate subject like a new language, progress **can** be plotted as a visible incrementation of fresh knowledge and newly acquired skills. But the application of any such system to chart growth in the mother tongue may only result in a mechanistic parody of the complexity of what is involved.

These warnings should not be taken as a total rejection of the kind of criterion-based approach outlined in our Chapter 2 model. And they should certainly not be seen as a denial of the oral syllabus's need to respond to the general ambition of the current assessment movement which at heart is, I take it, to provide **more** information about the individual's progress in the subject, information that is **more** securely and broadly based than the old exam routine permitted.

The conclusion to be drawn is that we must piece together a system sufficiently flexible and various to be both workable and compatible with the general aims of our oral teaching. In this, the set, criteria-carrying task will indeed make a contribution, since it will enable us to observe attainment in those situations where specific oral transactions **are** made. And in the same way, the traditional summative test may continue to have a value in that it will call for a particularly demanding performance that will provide an end-of-course opportunity to bring a variety of important syllabus themes into concentrated focus. But there will be yet other instances where a more open observation and impressionistic report will be unavoidable. Indeed, in so far as talk is essentially to do with creating an effect upon a listener, it is entirely appropriate that its evaluation should be partly based on affective values. We shall also require to bring into play some means by which the individual's general development may be logged and his participation in the syllabus as a whole monitored.

What, then, is needed is an assessment strategy that enables us to draw upon all the various assessment approaches available to us in order to build up a composite portrait of pupil progress in talk. The solution that is emerging to the particular needs of the oral syllabus is of a package of data compiled about the pupil. This package will be derived from several different sources and be gathered together in various ways, an approach that recognises that there is no one method of evaluation that can either yield the full range of information or carry the diversity of perspectives required. The hope would also be that the package approach will lift some of the teacher burden, since reliability would now lie in the cross-checking variety of assessment methods used rather than the rigorous application of any one of them.

4. An Oral Assessment Package

By the end of the course the teacher may, for example, have gathered together evidence from the following sources:

(a) **Summative Testing** — a planned performance that the pupil has had time to prepare and for which he has received an appropriate degree of assistance. He will clearly recognise that this is his opportunity to demonstrate his ability to address a group of listeners. At present, the test usually takes the form of a short (3-5 minutes) talk to an explicit, agreed remit under formal circumstances and before an audience (probably his classmates) — though it is to be hoped that other formats will also be tried out, drawing on a variety of situations and purposes. On its completion the speaker should also be expected to handle questions from his audience. The teacher will be responsible for the evaluation in which he will be guided by a set of predetermined criteria which will cover all major aspects such as 'voice', 'delivery', 'content' and 'impact'. A grade will be awarded and entered into the pupil's course record as an oral test result; there should also be a fuller, written report attached.

The summative test will have two main uses:

(i) to give a reading of how far the pupil has progressed — the extent to which he is now able to draw upon the experience gained during the rest of the course in order to cope with a particularly demanding oral situation;

(ii) to test his ability to operate in a formal context where he himself is responsible for organising, preparing and delivering the message. It might be thought, too, that his ability to fulfil one of the GRC-style talk purposes is also under observation, but as the emphasis must be on what the pupil can do and on his general qualities as a speaker, the talk is best left in the open form of 'experience-sharing, information, explanation and instruction'. Indeed, experience shows that most such talks quite naturally intermingle purposes and that arbitrary insistence for assessment purposes on adherence to one particular and in some respects quite notional, 'purpose' will confuse evaluation. (Take, for example, Willie's talk in Chapter 2 — is it 'information', is he 'deploying ideas' or is he 'describing personal experience'?)

Obviously, any such assessment is best placed at the end of the course but management problems (15 minutes per talk?) mean that it may have to be spread over a period of weeks, even months. Moreover any assessment of talk is best to be opportunistic to some extent and an earlier chance of catching a performance may be offered by a particular event or topic that sets off an interested response in some pupil. On the other hand, it may be possible for special timetabling arrangements to be made so as to release pupils and teachers for special oral assessment sessions at a convenient time of the year.

(b) **In-course Assessment** A log is kept of the pupil's progress through the various oral activities of the course. The key here is sound syllabus design and vigilant record keeping: work should be so structured as to mark out a range of talk assignments, each one of which takes its place as an integral part of the unit, the whole adding up a year's coverage of the major areas of talk as defined by some suitable checklist such as the one proposed in Chapter 3. Assessment will be entered as a simple grade into a coded, individualised 'Course Record' of the kind demonstrated in the Guidelines (page 60) and it will be made as and when the opportunity presents itself during the work of the unit.

This type of assessment is avowedly less formal and elaborate than is the case with the summative test. It may well be based on nothing more than impressionistic on-the-spot observation, though the teacher should draw on his own internalised checklist description of talk qualities so as to enable him to make rapid but informed judgment. 'Reliability' will be achieved by the pattern revealed over a number of occasions, rather than strictness within any one of them. Similarly, the oral 'assignment' may take a variety of shapes, including relatively simple ones such as reporting back after a group discussion, being asked to read aloud or to take part in a piece of role-play improvisation. It should, however, be a clearly defined oral task, recognised as such by the pupil and written into the unit outline. In this way, we should be able to deal with talk activities not easily accounted for by a formal summative approach, such as work in the group context or talk that is tied to one particular purpose such as giving directions, making a 'phone call or explaining how something works.

(c) **Pupil Evaluation** The above record is necessarily task-related. Some account of general progress that is related to the particular strengths and weaknesses of the individual pupil will also be required. This can be met by maintaining an open-grid pupil form of the kind exemplified on page 61 of the Guidelines. Into it may be entered any informal notes of pupil talk behaviour, achievement and failing that will accrue during the year. The teacher will simply note evidence as and when it shows itself and the accumulated record can then be drawn upon for any final profile comment.

Comment may be based on almost anything that is sufficiently revealing to afford insight into an individual pupil's general fund of articulateness and oral temperament — events as simple and as unpremiditated as a question-and-answer exchange in class or a conversation outside it may well serve this purpose. Various diagnostic-style checklists of language behaviour are available to focus observation, but the keynote is the informality of the whole process, and teachers should feel free to use such rough and ready criteria as the 'willingness to enter into a group project' or 'frequency with which he proffers contribution to a class discussion'. However, these impressions should be supplemented by occasionally setting up a situation where a teacher can engage the pupil in conversation and make a real effort to open his talk up by tapping his personal interests — the kind of spontaneous exchanges with Jackie or with the pupil on the topic of **Kes**, exemplified in Chapter 4.

(d) **Moderation Procedures** Any demand for an overall grade may be met by aggregating the scores, accumulated from the sources mentioned above, with a suitable weighting given between summative and in-course gradings

(perhaps in the ratio of 1 : 2). The personal evaluation will be used primarily as a source of descriptive report to be written into a profile though it may be found feasible, if so desired, to award an overall impression mark to contribute to the final aggregation.

To some extent, assessment reliability will be attained by this method of spreading evaluation procedures over a variety of situations because this will set up a pattern of mutual checks and balances. The kind of internal moderation system currently advocated in the Guidelines will provide further control. It will, however, be interesting to see how it actually works, for what is really needed in the assessment of talk is the development of a descriptive, continuous system of observation and on-the-spot evaluation, one that is able to react to talk in context over a range of situations and degrees of formality. The need for documentary evidence in the pursuit of some quasi-objective ideal should not lead to dependence on decontextualised tape-recordings. Ideally, the moderator should be an occasional visitor into the class, have acted as a participant in sample group and class discussion, and have talked with the pupils in interview and informal conversation. This sets a standard of involvement that is difficult to achieve given the likely modest scale of provision, but at the very least he should discuss syllabus notes since he should, above all else, be critically involved in the syllabus as a whole because it is its design, and the richness of opportunity it furnishes for regular, varied oral work, that will give the assurance of positive pupil activity in this area.

EXAMPLES

A. The Summative Test

Chapter 2 set out an example of the kind of open prepared talk which might form the summative test element in the pupil Willie's course assessment. There it was suggested that evaluation could be arrived at by a procedure of structured listener observation and reflection, in which the adjudicator works from a checklist of talk criteria arranged along a scale of speaker effectivenss. The essential first step in this exercise is for the teacher to develop, or acquire, a checklist which is informative enough to contain all the major aspects of talk performance but be sufficiently succinct to be workable. The Grade Related Criteria in the Guidelines offer us one such example, but it might be helpful to consider some others.

(a) The Written Report

One possibility is the simple verbal report. Here is an example written by an official English Speaking Board examiner immediately after the candidate's performance:

ENGLISH SPEAKING BOARD (INTERNATIONAL)

EXAMINERS REPORT

Name of Candidate ..... School/College or Organisation *Child Care Course*

Examination *Vocational* **Grade** *Preliminary* **Date of assessment** *June 2, 1982.*

Before you fill in the section titles make sure you have studied the notes overleaf

SECTION I *Prepared Talk: . . . The Samaritans in Kirkcaldy*

A clear introduction Jane. You quickly overcame your nervousness.
I particularly liked the way you spoke to the group — not just to me, and also the way in which you only glanced at your notes and did not read from them. You have obviously become very interested in the work of the Samaritans — I judge this by the enthusiastic way in which you spoke of them. You used your visual aids well; remember if you turn away from the group to point out something, pick up the volume a little.
Well done — first rate.

V Good
Pass

(b) Guidelines directed assessment

The smoothness of the above operation comes from the assured understanding of the relevant qualities at work by the examiner who is, after all, an experienced professional in the field. However, English teachers will find it useful to have behind them some set of guidelines in which key qualities are clearly defined and their description organised into grading bands.

In the example below we can see the guidelines drawn up for SCOTBEC to be used in assessing candidates for the Scottish National Certification in 1981.

The oral examination should take place in a group situation (8); it should be a three-five minute talk on ONE aspect of the topic.

A general talk will not be accepted.

The teacher's function is that of chairman only. No prompting of speakers unless necessary.

Marks awarded under: ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE
WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

20 marks for Ability to Communicate

17-20	*Excellent clarity and audibility. Excellent eye contact with listening group. Notes only glanced at — no reading for any length of time. Talk shows evidence of structure. Clear introduction and proper conclusion leading into questions. Visual aids well used. Variety of pace and stress.*
14-17	*Good clarity and audibility. Tries hard with eye contact. Makes use of notes but tries to give a talk, not a reading. Some kind of beginning, middle and end in the talk. Visual aids make a contribution to the talk. Not monotonous.*
11-14	*Makes an effort. Rather too much reading. Hesitant. Talk rather jerky and in need of better planning. Eye contact spasmodic. Clarity and audibility sometimes poor. Rather monotonous. Visual aids not very helpful. No real conclusion; talk tends to peter out.*
8-11	*Not a great deal of confidence. A reading rather than a talk. Hardly three minutes in length. Difficult to hear. Eye contact very poor. Monotonous. Visual aids useless to the subject of talk. No real structure. No conclusion as such. Wanders off the aspect.*
8- 0	*Indistinct. Unprepared. No real communication with audience.*

10 marks for willingness to communicate. *Here we are marking on the degree of interest and enthusiasm shown by the speaker and by his/her interest and involvement with other speakers by asking and answering questions.*

(c) **Coded Observation**

An elaborate descriptive list of this type cannot easily be managed during the course of the talk itself and is best treated as a document to be assimulated beforehand and referred to in retrospect. It will therefore be interesting to look at the assessors' marksheet in this SNC examination. This forms a ready observation schedule that may be quickly filled in during and just after the performance.

SNC ENGLISH & COMMUNICATION

Marksheet for Assessors

SNC Oral Skills

Name of Candidate _____

Date of Assessment _____

1. *Announcement of topic and aspect and introduction*
2. *Use of notes and degree of eye contact*
3. *Volume — audibility/variety*
4. *Articulation*
5. *Pace — controlled, hasty, variety*
6. *Visual aids — necessary, helpful, properly used*
7. *Attitude/Manner/Tone*
8. *Vocabulary — range, aptness*
9. *Depth of knowledge, evidence of preparation*
10. *Colloquial — speech and contact with audience*
11. *Correctness in language*
12. *Organisation of information*
13. *Length*
14. *Conclusion*

Any other comments

MARKS:—

The ideal assessment procedure is always going to be the one that combines detailed analysis with ease of operation. There now follow two examples which offer a solution to this need. The first is a completed copy of the 'Individual Oral Assessment' sheets kept at Banff Academy. Here we have an attempt to provide a very full breakdown of the talk into an aggregation of contributory skills, each one of which is made to carry its own mark, so that success may be precisely measured. These specifications are organised into a helpfully clear layout in which a criterion like, for example, 'Tone' is presented as a subskill of the large 'Voice/Delivery' area and its marking facilitated by the device of defining it into clear alternatives, 'varied/flat'. Adjudication, therefore, becomes a matter of making straight choices, down a checklist of oral attributes, a procedure that may, indeed, be done on the spot by a system of ringing each of the options chosen.

INDIVIDUAL ORAL ASSESSMENT _____

SPEAKER'S NAME AND CLASS _____

SUBJECT _____

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

1. During speech, tick or cross above suitable comment. Numbers after headings show maximum number of ticks or crosses that can be awarded. Only tick above the comments in BLOCK type — these are the positive aspects we are looking for.
2. The total amount of ticks gives the mark out of 20.
3. Add comments **before** the next speech begins.
4. Sign and date. Add number of talk.
5. Penalty of up to 5 for length (talk should last about 3 minutes).

VOICE DELIVERY (7 MARKS)	SPEECH COMMENTS	MARKER'S COMMENTS
Loudness (2)	WELL PROJECTED SO THAT EVERYONE CAN HEAR / too quiet / too loud	2
Clarity (2)	CLEAR, SOUNDS CRISP / indistinct, poorly pronounced	1 Could have been clearer at times
Tone (2)	VARIED / flat	1 Reasonably varied
Fluency (1)	CONFIDENT / hesitant	1
CONTENTS (8 MARKS)	SPEECH COMMENTS	MARKER'S COMMENTS
Knowledge/information (3)	DETAILED, ACCURATE Flimsy, inaccurate	2
Organisation, coherence of ideas (3)	ORGANISED, COHERENT disorganised, rambling	Quite good 2 Linking could have been better
Speech register (1)	GOOD SPEECH WORDS essay like	1
Word choice (1)	GOOD VOCABULARY ordinary vocabulary	1
STYLE/MANNER (5 MARKS)	SPEECH COMMENTS	MARKER'S COMMENTS
Audience contact (1)	HEAD UP, LOOKING AT ALL OF AUDIENCE / eyes down, not looking at audience	1
Stance (1)	RELAXED / too formal / lounging	1
Notes (1)	MATERIAL KNOWN notes overused	1
Impact (2)	MEMORABLE TALK / AVERAGE / audience bored	1 Interesting

TOTALS	
ticks	crosses

MARKER'S NAME _____

DATE _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

The next example again takes the form of a working checklist.[1] Again a full set of qualities is attached to a particularly simple analysis of three major areas: Surface, Flow, Communication — and accompanied by a graphic marking system which consists of plotting evaluation on to descriptive sliding scales.

CHECKLIST	SLIDING SCALE ALTERNATIVE			
1. SURFACE FEATURES				
AUDIBILITY	FULL	LAPSES	POOR	VERY LOW
ENUNCIATION	CLEAR	LAPSES	POOR	SEVERE PROBLEM
***MODULATION**	CONTROLLED ———	X	———	MONOTONOUS
2. FLOW OF TALK				
INTERVENTION	LIMITED	SOME	SUBSTANTIAL	TOO MUCH
FLUENCY	FLUENT	SOME LAPSES	GAP-FILLERS	ERRATIC
LUCIDITY	LUCID	SOME LAPSES	OBSCURE	INCOHERENT
3. COMMUNICATION				
***INITIATIVE**	MINIMUM SUPPORT NECESSARY ———	X	———	DOESN'T RESPOND
***PURPOSE**	ALWAYS AWARE ———	X	———	UNAWARE
RELEVANCE	RELEVANT	SOME LAPSES	DIGRESSES TOO MUCH	IRRELEVANT
***REGISTER**	APPROPRIATE ———	X	———	NO EVIDENCE
***DELIVERY**	FORCEFUL ———	X	———	NO DRIVE

* Sliding scale may be more appropriate than specific statements.
X marks the spot!

B. In-Course Assessment

The stand-up solo talk will probably remain the standard summative assessment performance simply because its open, self-chosen form enables the candidate to use it as a platform on which to display a full range of oral skills. It is, however, quite possible to treat other, more specific oral situations in an equally rigorous fashion if they, too, are made to yield definite pupil performances, each one of which is assessed according to a fully worked out checklist of related skills. At the Berwickshire High School, Duns, Foundation Courses have been devised in which a large-scale — and impressive — effort has been made to build in a variety of carefully assessed oral assignments. Thus in one session a pupil may be asked to respond to each of these talk demands:—

Reading aloud	Read a poem in Scots.
Information	Play the part of a witness to a road accident. A full description complete with map is supplied to the pupil who then has to prepare a succinct report and to answer interview questions.
Entertainment	Role-play in which pupil will be asked to take on the part of a person other than himself and act out a short scene.
Persuasion	Debate opinion within a group on relevant topic such as 'School Uniforms' or the 'Driving Test', be interviewed by the teacher afterwards.
Committee Work	Work in a group towards a solution of a set problem, such as a 'survival' test (eg group given list of 20 possible items of equipment — select and arrange in order the 10 most useful to survive on the moon).

1. We are grateful to John Fyfe, English Adviser, Highland, for supplying this example from an MDDO's in-service package.

Instruction **Relay a set of directions received as a garbled telephone message, involving the delivery of goods.**

In each case a complete list of talk features has been defined (again by using the 'semantic differential' device of choice between alternatives noted earlier) and put into the form of an adjudication sheet.

Below is an example for the last message item:

THE MESSAGE

Content					
1.	Names / Places	accurate	_____	confused	_____
2.	Order of items	correct	_____	disordered	_____
3.	Times / Dates	correct	_____	incorrect	_____
Quality of relay					
1.	Pace	even	_____	hesitant	_____
2.	Structure	connected	_____	disjointed	_____
3.	Register	appropriate	_____	inappropriate	_____
4.	Attitude to recipient	polite	_____	none	_____
Preparation					
1.	Notes	full	_____	incomplete	_____
2.	Easy to follow	yes	_____	no	_____
General remarks		very good	_____	very poor	_____
		good	_____	fair	_____
		Total	_____	**Total**	_____

The kind of intensive treatment to which the talk is most readily subjected may, in this way, be extended to cover a representative sample of oral activity. Realistically, however, it must be conceded that few schools will be able to give this kind of thoroughgoing treatment to each pupil's talk, especially as the Munn/Dunning proposals reach out to include many more than the relatively small groupings of Foundation pupils. Our proposed strategy will, therefore, have to recognise that with most of the oral work in the syllabus, assessment will have to be simplified and that both the full-scale checklist and the notion of an elaborate performance will have to be modified to enable the teacher to make quick overall appraisals within the context of the ongoing course-work.

Partly, this simplification may be achieved by using a fairly straightforward, self-contained task by which to sample a talk purpose. Thus the kind of message cited above may serve as a ready means of testing the pupils' ability to use talk in order to convey information. But there will also be a need to simplify the checklist itself, to use some over-riding criterion which will enable us to achieve a quick holistic evaluation. Perhaps this one will be supplied by simply asking the basic question: 'Did the speaker do what he set out to do?' In the original Foundation Pilot schools examination, for example, a very simple 'task accomplishment' approach was adopted in which the following 4-point scale was used, here summarised:

B. The standard grade, signifying the pupil can do the task; the pass level.

A. He can do it well; the enhanced award level.

C. Cannot do it but tried; the course completed level.

D. (Later 'no award') — made no real attempt; did not complete the course.

Just how basic this approach may be is seen by citing the essence of the Markers' instruction for the 'B' award in Talk: a 'B' award should be given, where 'meaning (is) clearly communicated to the listener without need for extra clarification'.

The same desire to refine assessment questions down to one overall principle is to be found in Arthur Wise's account of the 'criteria of acceptable speech'. Here he proposes that it is the 'interference' factor which is the basis of our judgement: 'When the hearer has to 'reconstruct" an utterance in his mind, something may be said to have interfered with his comprehension, and thus also with the speaker's communication. Many different things may cause interference: eg an unusual or outlandish expression; an ambiguous expression; excessively fast talking; slovenly speaking; erratic emphasis; clumsy phrasing etc'.[1]

1. Arthur Wise, **Communication in Speech**, Longmans 1964 p 72.

It may therefore be possible to rationalise the kind of checklist offered by the 'message' example, quoted above, into the one, simple 'did he or did he not communicate the message (so as to enable the recipient to make the required response)?' If we listen to these two examples in **Tape Extract 15**, where the pupil has been asked to relay a 'phone message requiring his lorry-driving father to deliver a load to a certain place, assessment may well become such a very straightforward matter. In claiming this, however, it should be emphasised that assessment purposes only are being discussed in this chapter and that the teacher will naturally wish to draw on his full checklist of related skills when he comes **to teach** this message-relaying skill to the class as a whole.

These taped examples, of course, provide easy justification for a basic did he/didn't he approach. Not all assignments or pupil results will be so well defined as these. It might, therefore, be found more practicable to return elsewhere to a fuller list, but one that is still simplified and capable of serving a variety of talk situations, so that it may become an almost automatic accompaniment to all oral work. Mintlaw Academy, Grampian, uses such a simple, all-purpose checklist in which four basic questions are asked and then made to add up to a straightforward composite grade.

How your English (oral) is Marked

During third and fourth year, you will be given regular assignments in Spoken English. These will all be marked in roughly the same way.

The marker will listen to your work, paying particular attention to four points.

CLARITY — *did you speak clearly, in a way that would allow a listener to hear every word?*

FLUENCY — *did you keep talking at a reasonable pace, or was your talk broken by hesitation, ums and ers?*

MEANING — *did you say what you meant to say, and did you make your meaning clear?*

CONTENT — *what ideas did you express, how well did you put them together, and how wide a range of language did you use?*

The marker will give a mark of 1-3 for each of these points.

1. outstanding, no problems. *2. competent, but some weaknesses.* *3. serious problems.*

The marker will then give an overall grade which will be from 1-5. Grade 4 will be considered an 'average' performance, Grade 1 excellent, and Grade 5 serious problems.

Whatever format of checklist guidance is found to be most usable, the primary requirement is to find a way of assessing oral activity both consistently and unobtrusively and this will be best done by asking the same basic questions about a pupil's talk as it emerges from his work within his English course, and to do so in a way that will yield straightforward on-the-spot answers. Reliability will be assured by the assessment system's ability to cover a fair sample, rather than by time-consuming scrupulousness within a lesser number of them. The Berwickshire High School, as we have already seen, attempts to achieve regular in-depth evaluation but its ability to provide a rich diet of oral activity for its 'Foundation' sets is an equally significant safeguard for just assessment. In **Tape Extract 16** you can hear the same pupil attempting to meet two different demands for talking 'to convey information', both of which spring from his general classwork. In the first, his class reader provides the opportunity for a quick interview conversation with the teacher, an occasion which, his class teacher comments, was carried out with very little preparation. The impression — favourable, surely — of the pupil's expository skills gained under these relatively informal, spontaneous circumstances may be cross-checked, and confirmed, by listening to his performance in a talk where he is asked to present an informative portrait of his local area by playing the role of a courier guiding a party of tourists on a sightseeing trip through the Borders. Yet, although this is a comparatively elaborate assignment, the talk has come from the opportunity presented by the reading and writing that he has been involved in during a 'local community' unit.

C. Pupil Evaluation

Talk remains a difficult, slippery area in which to make secure assessment. However thoroughgoing a summative testing, to whatever extent that testing is complemented by a regular in-course account, the object of our measurements will always be personal, fugitive in nature, an expression of temperament and relationship, as well as purposeful situation. An indispensable source of information concerning the pupil must, therefore, be the kind of impressionistic observation of his day-to-day language behaviour that teachers have always made, but which now should be recorded as an appropriate means of completing our oral assessment record.

Here it will be sufficient to keep evaluation very informal, a simple noting down of what strikes us as significant when it reveals itself amidst the general routines of class, and indeed school, life. The teacher's own alert sympathy will be the best source of information, but his awareness may be heightened by developing a knowledge of what forms of behaviour are significant in this area. In this instance, 'a table of classroom observations' such as this one below may prove enlightening. It is offered, not as a schedule to be systematically filled in, but as a guide to the kinds of features to be used in evaluating performance.

Communicative Skill

Speaks with little awareness of audience/classmates	—	Uses language with power and clarity
Difficulty in answering questions clearly, succinctly		
Difficulty in explaining self in class situation		Adapts to audience
		Can always make self understood

Content

Seldom has anything to say	—	Expresses range of ideas on varied topics
Doesn't initiate ideas or responses		Will offer suggestions/ideas
Seems dull and unimaginative		Shows individuality and imagination

Fluency

Rarely talks/inhibited	—	Talks freely and willingly
Needs to be coaxed/prompted		Will talk spontaneously and without strain

Language

Meagre vocabulary	—	Uses wide range of words
Low descriptive/explanatory content		Forceful expression/articulate
		Makes impact/clear

Organisation

Rambles/difficulty in keeping to point	—	Always relevant and concise
Little sense of sequence		Clear structure/logical sequence
Speaks with little sense of purpose		Purposeful/to the point

Attitude

Ill at ease/awkward	—	Confident/poised
Taciturn		Talkative
Antagonistic		Willingly enters into oral activity
Detached		Involved

It is unlikely, however, that such opportunistic scrutiny will generate sufficient evidence for an informed profile of pupil strengths and weaknesses in every case. Some pupils will be too introverted or simply too shy to offer more than a regular withdrawn reticence in class and a tentative showing in the oral work demanded of them. With these pupils some attempt, at least once or twice during the session, should be made to **engage** them in talk, not in order to 'test' but to draw them out so as to discover just what they can do and, more importantly, to encourage them that they really have got something interesting to say to others. In such cases, because observational evidence is always likely to be fragmentary and one-sided, it would be advisable to make a point of holding an open interview-conversation with the pupil, either on a topic drawn from classwork or simply on some personal interest. We have already listened to one example of this in the preceding section, but we can drop in on another such case from the same school, the Berwickshire High, where we can hear in **Tape Extract 17** a girl discussing her sporting enthusiasms with her teacher. Their conversation is worth listening to because this is the kind of pupil who in normal open class would simply be passed over. As her teacher says, 'A very shy girl and yet she enters into a dialogue with her interviewer that would suggest she had been doing this many times before'. He might also have added that she does so in part because it is his own sympathetic yet interestedly insistent probing that warms her out of her habitual silence. This example therefore shows us not only what any pupil, however 'untalkative', may be led to do, but also the kind of interviewing art that will help him or her to do it.

A Final Comment

This chapter has attempted to suggest that the principal means of easing the formidable management burdens placed upon English teachers by oral skills teaching will be to use the work that is already there as a normal part of the syllabus for a large proportion of our assessment evidence. This is an argument that assumes that oral activity will indeed be as regular a feature of day-to-day classwork as are reading and writing, that there will be rich opportunity for pupils to talk, to explain and to give accounts to the class as a whole, to meet and to discuss in groups, and to engage their teacher, visitors and each other in real dialogue. Obviously, a traditional teacher-talk-dominated regime in which all activity is conducted through whole-class oral transmission will not yield sufficient occasion for the pupil to demonstrate what he can do. An essential underpinning of the assessment strategy proposed in this section will be the maintainance of the methodology to support it.

CHAPTER SIX

LISTENING

SUMMARY OUTLINE

1. Content Through Oral Purposes: Activities for the Syllabus

This chapter follows the direction taken with Talk in earlier chapters in that it seeks to establish a workable 'English Teaching' procedure by examining the parallels and differences that exist between Listening and the other language modes. The conclusion will be that while there are helpful comparisons to be made, Listening presents unique problems which must be accounted for by incorporating special strategies into any basic classroom approach.

The starting point is the obvious one of considering to what extent the patterns so far worked out for Talk may have relevance. For 'content' this may be quite considerable in that we can regard Listening as the receptive end of Talk production and thus build up a syllabus as a balanced, representative range of activities derived from the set of oral purposes defined in Chapter 3. The result is that we should teach pupils 'to derive' information, 'to follow' instruction and so on. A full checklist of such learning activities is sketched out, and a simplification into the three areas of Listening 'to do', 'to learn' and 'to make a personal response' is proposed.

2. The Skills to be Taught: The Similarity with Reading

The model of Talk will not, however, tell us the skills that we should be identifying and teaching in order to help pupils fulfil the purposes defined above. For this we shall have to turn to the guidance that may be offered by the example of Reading since that is the other mode that demands receptive, interpretative skills rather than productive, expressive ones. It is this comparison that suggests that the basic teaching approach should be one of presenting pupils with oral 'messages' ('texts') in response to which they should be asked to answer questions that have been selected so as to identify and practise the required 'interpretation' skills.

As with Reading this procedure may result in a narrow, piecemeal routine preoccupied with literal comprehension, which in Listening terms must mean 'literal recall', and thus turn the whole process into little more than a passive memory exercise. Such a degeneration is illustrated here. The answer is to base our work on the more recent developments in classroom Reading and to ensure that listening material is presented to the pupil as a genuine, purposeful task, in a fully introduced unit context and then to demand from him a holistic response in the form of a report, decision, prediction, rejoinder, and so on.

Small-scale questions will still have to be set but these should be to help the pupil work towards the accomplishment of his set task and should therefore be based on real aural interpretation skills. An example of a checklist of such skills is offered, both in a detailed and simplified form.

3. A Teaching Approach to Listening: Its Peculiar Demands

However much progress may be made by a selective adaptation of procedure already established in the other modes, we must eventually come up against the fact that Listening does pose peculiar demands by virtue of the fact that it is fugitive in nature: unlike a reading message, there will be no text that is permanently available to our detailed interpretative scrutiny.

This means that a classroom approach cannot depend upon text-searching questions which encourage the pupil to put together a meaning by working directly on the piece. Instead what we shall have to teach will be strategies for helping the pupil to capture and to store significance, ways of entering into the listening task and of preparing and organizing his responses to it. Some proposals are made and actual examples of classroom work offered where, by dividing the teaching cycle into a 'before-during-after' pattern, suggestions are given as to how to encourage the pupil to anticipate and establish questions to be answered by the messages beforehand, to take notes in an appropriately organized manner during the listening and to review and sort out notes afterwards.

All this is set out in diagrammatic form in section 4: **A Teaching Model for Listening.**

Examples

Full classroom examples are attached to the discussion summarised above, chosen so as to illustrate actually taught methods for Listening within each of the main purpose areas: to do (making a decision as to whether to spend a holiday in a certain area after listening to an interview with someone who lives there); to learn (solving a historical problem concerning the destruction of a famous building after hearing a talk on it); to make a personal response (predicting how a story will end; putting together a descriptive account of a dramatised disaster).

Tape Extracts referred to: Nos. 18, 19.

1. Content Through Oral Purposes: Activities for the Syllabus

Listening is the natural partner of talk. In constructing a syllabus for it, we should be able to follow the pattern established for oral skills.

The matter of content may, for example, be settled quite smoothly by regarding Listening as a series of activities that occur within the purpose areas mapped out for Talk, though, obviously, practised in a reciprocal form. We may be said, therefore, to listen in order to gain information, to follow instructions, to get an answer — we could go right down Chapter Three's list converting oral into aural in this way.

The result would be this syllabus outline:

Information	To derive information
Instruction	To follow directions To find out how to do something
Enquiry	To find out answers to questions To relate to speaker
Persuasion	To come to a decision: (i) whether one should believe something (accept/criticise an argument, adopt a creed, vote for a candidate etc.) (ii) whether one should take a particular course of action (buy/reject a product, go to a film, join a club etc.)
Entertainment	To make a personal response: (i) to become interested in another's experience (be amused, moved, excited by it; see parallels between it and one's own experience; identify with speaker etc.) (ii) to engage with literature (become imaginatively involved in plot, character, setting of drama, oral poetry, dramatised fiction; appreciate language, atmosphere and craft). The critical appreciation of media products, especially Television and Video material, would also come into this category.
Committee work	To collaborate with others in working towards a joint outcome (discuss, debate, fill specific roles such as chairman or secretary; combine on a project).

As with Talk, the emphasis is on purpose throughout, though, conversely, it must be on what the listener gets out of the message rather than puts into it. Indeed, if we sharpen this notion into seeing purpose as the action taken as a result of the listening, we can simplify the syllabus into three major areas of listener response:

To do. Here some overt action is the outcome: this might be making something in a certain way, following a route, deciding to purchase a particular brand, or voting for a particular candidate and includes all our purposes except 'Entertainment'. This area covers everyday, living-in-society transactions.

To learn. Here the purpose is the more general and passive one of adding to our understanding and acquiring new knowledge. Again many purposes are involved, though in terms of understanding a process rather than actually carrying it out, of discovering an item of information in the cause of our own enlightenment, and so on. 'Entertainment' might also be relevant here, though again with the emphasis on, for example, finding out about human experience rather than being aesthetically involved in its dramatisation. Action is not called for: if there is any tangible outcome it will be in the form of notes, summaries, lists etc. 'Education' might be the best way to sum up the area of operation here: indeed, the pupil will already be perfectly familiar with the demands of this listening area!

To make a personal response. Here the interest is not so much with outcome as with involvement in the message itself, with affect rather than effect. Thus the listener will try to enter into the imaginative, human and aesthetic life of the message which might take the form of a lively anecdote, a poetic ballad, autobiographical reminiscences or a tragic drama. Terms like 'engagement', 'identification', 'appreciation' express the values at work here. No practical outcome is reasonably expected but a written or spoken record of personal or critical evaluation might eventually result. The distinctive generic field is personal anecdote, autobiography, story-telling, oral poetry and drama.

2. The Skills to be Taught: The Similarity with Reading

A balanced, wide-ranging syllabus of listening **activities** may be worked out on the basis of oral purposes, an approach which, in its turn, has been derived from writing. However, when we come to investigate the kind of aural **skills** that need to be learned in order to fulfil the various purposes, we find that this is a model that will begin to lose its power. Properties like delivery, clarity, fluency and impact are essentially expressive qualities, whereas Listening has more to do with the receiving, the understanding and appreciation of the message. In

this regard, we are dealing with a mode that has more in common with Reading than it has with Talk, one whose skills are best seen as being **interpretative** in nature.

From our teaching point of view, this correspondence is a most useful one since there already exists a well-established procedure for classroom work in Reading. This consists of giving the pupil a text and then asking him to answer a series of questions on content, structure and language — an exercise that will focus his attention on the significant textual features and help him to practise as well as to assess the skills necessary for their comprehension.

The familiar English routine of the interpretation passage should give us a similarly clearcut strategy for the teaching of Listening: the text could be delivered by teacher recitation or tape-recording, to be followed by a series of questions which may be answered orally or, more conveniently, in writing. This, quite naturally, has been the approach that schools have turned to in their first attempts to teach listening skills. It is equally natural that these early experiences have brought their share of false starts and misapprehension. These mistakes, however, have the power to add to our awareness of the range of skills involved in aural work and the considerations to be taken into account in their teaching.

Let us, at this stage, listen to one such early aural comprehension. If you turn on **Tape Extract 18** you will hear first a passage on 'Scott of the Antarctic'[1] and then a series of questions to be answered by the pupils in writing (you are left to work out those answers for yourself!) Regardless of how many you got right, the limitations of this exercise should be apparent enough. In many ways, this example reproduces many of the features of the old 'interp' with its reliance on small piecemeal interrogation that refers with unremitting dullness to a narrow range of textual concerns of the factual and the spot-the-figure-of-speech variety. 'Scott', moreover, comes as a decontextualised visitation, selected, one suspects, because of its convenience as a repository of question-spinning facts and figures.

If not peculiar to it, these crudities are, however, exacerbated by being attached to an oral rather than written medium: the obsession with comprehension as an accumulation of detail must, because of the transient nature of the aural text, become here a demand for literal recall so that 'good' listening will appear to the pupil to be a frantic matter of screwing up your concentration in order to memorise as you go along, a carry-on that must possess even less learning value than its equivalent does in reading, a point that is conceded by the way in which the teaching instruction is confined to the unhelpfully facile 'pay attention and listen carefully'.

There are other objections to this exercise, most noticeably that it does not employ authentic material, that the business of subjecting pupils to a passage so obviously read out of a book in the name of aural advancement is spurious. It is true that a genuine syllabus would be one that concentrates on distinctively oral material such as interviews, discussion, bulletins, story-time on the radio, but it is also the case that we all are — school children especially — expected in our daily lives to cope with recited or even spoken messages that are similarly dense in their factual content and dry in their presentation, whether delivered by teachers, lecturers, people instructing us or broadcasting to us on radio and TV. It is not its written origins that turn this taped extract into a dubious learning experience; indeed the analogy with the teaching of reading still holds since 'Scott', as used here, is the victim of the kind of narrow, unimaginative and imperceptive treatments of text that have increasingly become discredited throughout all our English work. It is not surprising that teachers in their urgent search for a means of dealing with Listening should have turned to the most elementary of practices already available, and found in it the traditional 20 questions comprehension exercise.

Conversely, it will, perhaps, be the recent developments which have been made in the teaching of Reading, that will show us how to make use of the aural text. Our present case could be very much enlivened, for example, by putting it into a context of thematic concern and reader purpose. The unrelieved data of Scott's equipment could well take on a real meaning if the text had been attended to as part of a unit on 'Heroes and Heroism' or 'Exploration and Danger' and prefaced by some scene-setting discussion in which the pupil's own existing attitudes and knowledge about these topics were brought to bear. Similarly, he could have been asked to listen out for that information which would help him come to some decision: for instance, whether Scott's preparations were sound, whether they foreshadowed the later disaster. Thus he could have become involved in a real interpretative process of selecting significance, of picking up implication and making connections.

What is really needed, in short, is an approach that is informed by an awareness of the interpretation skills demanded by the effective response to another's message, whether it comes in the shape of a written text or spoken utterance. In the current reading syllabus much is now made of skills taxonomies and some effort has been made to adapt them into an outline list of listening requirements. Here is an example of one such collection[2]:

Particular Skills

Basic Skills

(i) Remembering significant details
(ii) Remembering simple sequences of words and ideas
(iii) Following oral directions
(iv) Paraphrasing a spoken message

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1. This 'text' has — despite its subject matter — no connection with the SEB material, produced in 1983. Any relationship with any other test, living or dead, is purely coincidental!

2. From a list supplied by Richard Ellis.

(v) Following a sequence of developing events (e.g. in a play), developing traits (e.g. a character in a story), developing ideas (e.g. a speaker's argument)
(vi) Understanding literal meanings in words
(vii) Understanding connotative meanings in words
(viii) Understanding meanings of words from spoken text
(ix) Formulating and answering questions produced from listening
(x) Selecting main ideas and summarising
(xi) Understanding the organisation and structure of ideas well enough to predict what may come next
(xii) Using spoken material in order to plan future action
(xiii) Listening to imagine, for enjoyment, for emotional response
(xiv) Awareness of paralinguistic devices — body language, gesture, eye contact etc.

Critical Skills

(i) Distinguishing amongst spoken material in accordance with criteria (e.g. true/false; relevant/irrelevant etc.)
(ii) Judging validity and adequacy of main ideas, arguments and hypotheses
(iii) Distinguishing supported statements from opinions and evaluating them
(iv) Comparing and contrasting ideas
(v) Evaluating fallacies: e.g. self-contradictions, avoiding the point, hasty or false generalisations, false analogy, failure to present all choices, appealing to ignorance
(vi) Identifying affective loading in communication and evaluating it
(vii) Detecting and evaluating bias
(viii) Evaluating the qualifications of a speaker
(ix) Judging relationships between speakers

The list is a very full one and in its analytical precision presupposes that the oral text is permanently available for detailed audience scrutiny in the way that it only is in reading. It might be more effective, as well as more convenient, to rationalise our account of constituent skills into a somewhat simpler taxonomy. I should, therefore, like to propose that when we listen to and achieve understanding of a message, it may be said that three broad steps have to be taken: we receive the message; we understand it; we react to it. In each of these stages we may see a particular cluster of interpretative factors at work:

Receiving: Picking up details; knowing what the topic is; identifying main events, characters, ideas; following sequence of thematic or narrative development; awareness of broad sound effects such as atmosphere and pitch variation and accent.

Understanding: Of ideas and themes; achieving awareness of relationships — between argument and evidence, fact and opinion, main and subsidiary and illustrative statements; making inferences and responding to connotations; awareness of tonal values such as irony and admiration; tuning into more subtle sound effects.

Responding: Coming to an assessment of the worth of the message, its validity, accuracy, relevance; appreciating its application to our own needs, experience and purposes; being able to appreciate or criticise its effectiveness; making a response to aesthetic values.

In some ways this is an adaptation of the now familiar reading injunction 'to read the lines, between the lines and beyond the lines', though this should now, presumably, become listening to, between and beyond the sounds. Just as that tag was intended as a succinct summing up of interpretative needs, so the proposals sketched in here do not supplant the fuller listening list which will continue to have a checklist usefulness as a source of further elucidation of the kinds of subskills involved in each of the broader categorisations suggested here: thus 'Basic skills' 1-8 may be seen as Receiving, 9-14 as Understanding and the 'Critical Skills Set' as Responding.

3. A Teaching Approach to Listening: Its Peculiar Demands

A teaching strategy may now be seen as emerging in which, as with Reading, we place the utterance in context, give the pupil an overall purpose in listening to it, and then direct him in that listening by asking questions selected from our checklist of interpretation skills.

But it is at this point that we must pause before the Reading analogy runs away with the matter, for up to now we have simply been following those respects in which the two modes do resemble each other and ignoring the peculiar difficulties posed by our oral medium. If we ask what is really distinctive about listening as a process, there is one feature that stands out with an inescapable awkward prominence and that is that it is **fugitive in nature.** Any teaching that we offer him must help the pupil not only to understand the utterance, but also to hold on to its essential import. If listening is an interpretative process, our teaching of it must recognise that it is very much a busines of deriving meaning from a message that is continually passing us by, of **capturing significance,** rather than working towards it.

For our classwork this means, I think, attending to the following listener needs:

The Listening Purpose Although we will give the pupil clear tasks in his listening, they must take the form of relatively simple, one-piece demands such as 'to arrive at a decision', 'to select some relevant information', 'to make a brief summary of argument', and so on. We must resist

any English teacher's itch to exhaust the text of all possible subtleties of meaning and language: the utterance is simply not available for the kind of intensive scrutiny that it is in reading and, in any case, the speaker himself may only expect to work through broad effects.

Listening as a Strategy Because of the elusive nature of the material involved, we must help the pupil to acquire a repertoire of strategies to help him cope with different types of listening demands — to focus, to anticipate, to carry out running review, to organise understanding as it accumulates and so on. Although we shall draw upon a checklist of skills in setting tasks, their contribution will be to clarify the direction of the overall response required, to help the listener focus on what is relevant to his larger purpose. They should not act as a battery of separate points and features.

Listener Intervention One of the problems in handling oral material is that it so easily imposes a passive, attention-paying role upon the listener. Yet if we are to make sense of what we are hearing, we must be prepared to lay hold on the text and bend it to our comprehension needs. In many real life situations the listener is able to do this by intervening in the utterance, by asking questions of the speaker.

Far from being some knack of instantly retaining each and every detail, 'good' listening will often take the form of asking for further clarification or even for a repetition. Where appropriate — and possible — we should set up classroom activities which give the listener the opportunity to break into the speaker's flow and give it manageable shape by querying it in this way. Although it will not be easily practicable to introduce circuits of speaker-listener interchange for every pupil in the class very often, we could at least inculcate the habit of active listening by asking pupils to jot down points **they** would raise, questions **they** would ask of any utterance that is used in aural teaching.

Listening Retention Not all types of listening take an interactive format, however, and, in any case, it will not always be possible to control the utterance by directly interveming in it. In formal, solo-to-audience discourse, for instance, some other strategy will have to be employed and here I see no alternative but to involve writing. The experienced attender of lectures, for example, organises his listening into notes and much of our teaching here will be directed towards the offering of note-taking strategies.

4. A Teaching Model for Listening

If we put together what is most relevant from the interpretative approaches already worked out in Reading and combine them with the special strategic needs identified above, then we can posit the following teaching model:

Listening: A Teaching Approach

ACTIVITY	a) Work out listening opportunities within unit.
↓	b) Select suitable activity.
TASK	a) Decide purpose: What will pupil be listening for? To do? To learn? To make personal response?
↓	b) Embody this in suitable end-product.
SKILLS	a) What will pupil be listening out for? What aspects of message are relevant to task?
↓	b) How will he listen? What strategy will he have to employ?
STRATEGY	Decide on teaching pattern: what should we ask pupil to do?
↑ ↓	a) **Before.** To prepare for listening, 'to orientate'.
	b) **During.** To focus on and collect relevant aspects, 'note-taking'.
	c) **After.** To review listening, organise notes.
SUPPORT	Decide on support to offer pupil in doing above. Prepare for task with simpler version of it. Sequence listening into episodes, stages, repeats. Break down listening task into stages. Offer partial answers to be completed, written support. Provide listening structure (for note-taking).

Assessment Note — It is just as difficult to achieve a 'pure' assessment of Listening as it is of Reading. Both demand receptive behaviour and must be converted into expressive form before evaluation can clearly be made. Some form of writing or, perhaps, follow-up talk or discussion will therefore usually be involved, either by direct questions on the message itself or by carrying out a related assignment on it (the 'end product' identified above). It may be possible, however, to present the pupil with a 'During' task in a form that will monitor the efficiency with which he is able to use his listening so as to, for example, fill in a schedule or mark off selections, formats involving a minimum of writing.

Examples

(a) Listening to Do

If you listen to Tape Extract 19 you will hear part of an interview that Brian Johnston, the presenter of BBC Radio 4's **Down your Way,** made when that programme visited Elgin in 1982. The interviewee here is Stephen Young, Editor of the local paper **The Northern Scot,** and his comments provide a full and interesting introduction to the Elgin area.

This is promising teaching material because it could be used as a listening opportunity in a Local Community Unit. To work out a teaching approach I would suggest the following steps, based on the model already outlined. These steps are presented here in note-form.

Activity

(Obviously) listening to the taped interview as it appeared in the programme.

Task

(i) Tape makes up a portrait of a place in spoken words. Much information given but not purely for its own sake; this is a radio programme that entertains through well chosen, vivaciously presented information via real inhabitant voices: evocation of place that invites listener reaction along lines of 'that sounds like an attractive place/worth visiting/worth going there . . .' Could therefore be used as 'Listening for Information' but in the 'Listening to Do' category. Suitable purpose might be to make a decision as to whether to visit or spend holiday in Moray.

(ii) Ask pupil to use tape to prepare material for holiday advert/brochure/poster or to write a report on whether he would recommend Elgin as a holiday centre for the average family.

Skills

(consulting our earlier list of interpretative factors)

(i) **Receiving:** basic details of place, but only enough to show tourist potential; accuracy; selection of key items.

(ii) **Understanding:** grouping details together to relate to theme (of holiday appeal of Moray); spotting omissions of key facts (e.g. weather); awareness of tone of voice (Young's enthusiasm and various emphases); of emotive description ('wonderful').

(iii) **Responding:** apply information to others' needs (real holiday tourists' needs and tastes); judge reliability/partnership of speaker; assess completeness of information given.

Strategy

Basically, organise listening into a matter of collecting and checking off key points.

(i) **Before.** Clarify issue; review existing knowledge. Ask class to think of reasons a family might/might not come to Moray for a holiday.

(ii) **During.** Compare reasons given or implied in programme with own; compile new set of reasons.

(iii) **After.** Organise reasons into headings: balance out pros and cons. Write report.

Support

Break task down into stages, using a first and second listening (first for simple jotting down of given items, second for detailed review, checking against list of holiday needs.) Provide answering structure that helps pupil divide reasons into 'pro' and 'con'. Provide typical holiday needs as checklist — but arrange into problem-solving form so as to encourage ability to draw items together and make inferences. Use a worksheet format to achieve these objectives.

At the end of this chapter, you will see a specimen of the actual worksheet used, completed with a pupil's filled in responses. The larger teaching intention here was to offer the pupils an example of how to set about purposeful, organised listening and to push them towards a strategy by which they could attain these ends. The chief element of this example of 'Listening to Do' is that of approaching the message in terms of listener needs. The particular tactic suggested is the drawing up of a checklist of significant questions that the taped information is to be used to answer.

Because, at this stage, the priority was to teach a general approach, a heavily structured worksheet was employed, but it was to be hoped that on subsequent occasions the pupils would be able to devise parallel tactics for themselves, when confronted with similar listening demands. That this did indeed turn out to be the case with this particular set of pupils is shown by the fact that when they were asked to listen to a second extract from the **Down Your Way** programme, in which a local 'wayfaring' enthusiast was asked about his sport, they were able to go about gathering in significant details in an organised question-answer format. The specific demand set was for them to write a short report on the attractions of this pastime as a family activity, and they showed that they were able to work towards this by drawing up initial lists of queries such as: 'How much does it cost?', 'Does it require expertise or can anyone do it?', 'Does it take a long time?', 'Are there courses near to where we live?', and so on! The taped message was then played so as to provide them with the necessary data on which to base their decisions on 'Wayfaring: a family pursuit?'

The notes compiled by the pupil whose 'Stephen Young' worksheet has already been included, are also given at the end of this chapter.

One further point is worth making about the worksheet examples shown at the end of this chapter. They are very elaborate, instructions are spelt out with the punctiliousness of an SRA Teachers' Manual, and they do read as if they are to be completed in an atmosphere of individual pen-pushing silence. I certainly do not see this apparent attention to explicit routine as necessary or even desirable: these present worksheets were made up partly as an exercise to fill an in-service purpose of defining teaching strategy with sufficient exactness to make a full demonstration of them to other teachers. In practice, much of the 'Instructions to Pupils' element was modified into a pupil-teacher discussion on how to go about listening to particular types of material, and many of the answer sections could be quite easily dealt with through lively class and group talk. It is certainly not intended to suggest that a heavy worksheet-plus-prepared-tape approach is the best way to tackle the business of understanding and making a response to Listening, rather the hope is that this mode will become a further language resource to draw upon in the pupil exploration of classroom topics and material and that its development will be pursued through an intermingling of Reading, Writing and — especially perhaps — Talk!'

(b) Listening to Learn

As it happened, the same **Down Your Way** programme threw up an excellent example for 'Listening to Learn' activities. One of the interviews was with the Reverend John Evans on the topic of Elgin Cathedral, an interview that developed into a potted history of this important feature of Moray's past.

It will not be necessary to write out a full teaching analysis for this second example. Instead we attach at the end of this chapter copies of the worksheets given to the pupils to work through. These sheets were intended to guide the class towards an appropriate strategy for listening to the kind of material where information is presented in a packed narrative-cum-expository form. Since real learning was to be the purpose, and not a passive soaking-in of facts and dates, the emphasis was to be on compiling data, on understanding general issues, themes, cause-and-effect, important as against unimportant events; what one might term the significance of the factual material. Consequently, pupils were asked not just to get the historical events right, but also to appreciate 'cause and effect', to work out why the Cathedral (now a spectacular ruin) came to be the way it is today. To inculcate this approach, pupils were given a 'practice tape' on which a general history of Elgin was recounted. They were asked to order their notes into a visible time sequence for the events and the significance attached to them, to follow, in fact, the model offered in the first of the two worksheets for this activity. The result was that when they came to the Cathedral tape they had a ready-made system to bring into play.

A second important feature of this teaching is to emphasise the notion of **purposeful** listening and therefore to demand a definite pupil response: here he has to use his aural evidence to explain why Elgin Cathedral got into its present derelict state, an activity that requires the kind of focusing and selection activities that are basic to the listening process.

(c) Listening to Make a Personal Response

Two examples are offered here, each of which illustrates one possible approach to a major type of 'Personal Response' listening, that is to fiction and to descriptive passages. In both instances, a copy of the pupil worksheet is supplied at the end of the chapter, and these, with the explanatory comments appended below, should be sufficient to give a clear idea of the general approach used (reproductions of tape recordings would be overlong, unfortunately).

(i) **Listening to Stories**

The example used is the story **The Mystery of the Beehive** by Bernard MacLaverty that appeared in 1982 as one of the BBC Schools Broadcast **Chapbook** series (the full recording takes about 18 minutes).

In following any story the main demands appear to be to track the plot, considered as a sequence of events which probably lead up to some sort of a climax; then, to get to know the main characters, possibly to the extent of identifying with 'the hero'; and lastly, to appreciate the human significance of those characters and the events they experience — the theme or the 'general' meaning. In this case I wanted the pupils first of all to grasp the essential narrative features concerning the boy hero Brendan, and his position as a holiday-maker at his uncle's Galloway farm, away from the troubles of his native Belfast: then to appreciate the suspicions he has about the odd Russian refugee farmworker (a bee-keeper), Mr. Swegensov: and lastly to become interested in the events that lead up to the climax of Brendan's tracking down of Mr. Swegensov ('What **does** he keep in that beehive he's always poking around in?'), and the final discovery that this 'mystery' is nothing more sinister than a desire to keep a souvenir or two of his own Russia as a personal communion with his past.

However, I also hoped that the class would listen sensitively enough not just to treat this story as a sequence of narrative information, but also to appreciate the wider significance that attaches to Brendan's discoveries of the human pathos beneath the odd, foreign exterior of the war refugee and the similarity between their predicaments, since they are both, in a sense, exiles.

To achieve the required degree of aural responsiveness needed, I felt, a closely structured worksheet that would lead the class through the story, yet do so in a manner that would ask them to enter into the imaginative life of the story, to become involved in its developing patterns. The solution was to break the story up into episodes and then ask the class to reach their own understanding of both plot and character in order to predict what was most likely to happen next. Because critical appreciation seems to be as important to listening to a piece of oral literature as it is to reading it, I also asked them to state their expectations in terms of preferences. The final section is intended to act as a way of reflecting upon the story so as to arrive at a considered evaluation of it, both as a story pure and simple ('Was it more tame than you expected it to be?'), and as a depiction of character ('But didn't you learn something about the people involved — and about others as well?').

(ii) **Listening to Descriptive Material**

The worksheet used in our story example is, admittedly, a heavily structured one, although it must be said that both the second year and fourth year classes that tried it seemed to respond well enough. The hope is that they will have learned something about the kind of interplay between character and plot, and of the kinds of thematic values that are at work in story telling so that next time their own listening will be just that bit more alert to such features.

In this instance, however, a very much more simple worksheet approach has been used, though the objectives have also been scaled down to match. Here we employed a dramatised version of the first chapter in John Prebble's splendid Tay Bridge disaster book **The High Girders.** This piece is typical of the intensely described account that not only carries narrative information but which also attempts to envelop the reader or listener in a developing pattern of images and atmospheric effects so as to build up a sense of wider significances at work (here the ominous frailty of the man-made structure against the potency of Nature). In other words, the details are only as important as the dramatic values that attach to them.

Consequently a straightforward listening strategy was offered to the pupils in that they were asked, first to listen for the bare facts, and then for the descriptive effects that were used to dramatise them. Purpose was given by asking the class to approach the material as newspaper reporters investigating the incident in order to write up a front page account that would not only be factually accurate (!) but also vivid enough to make good copy. Similarly, note-taking was organised by the use of a supposed reporters' note-pad, in which appropriate headings would help him to gather together the material and the associated effects, necessary for this write-up.

There now follow the worksheet examples, set out in their order of mention above. Where possible, completed sheets are given as they were worked at in class by pupils of Elgin High School where these listening approaches were tried out. No attempt has been made to pick out either the best pupils, or the worst. Indeed, the major criterion for inclusion here has been legibility and the use of a dark enough pen to yield photocopies! Please note, however, that each of these sheets represents what was done in **one** 50-55 minute period only.

LISTENING FOR INFORMATION (1)

Today we shall be listening to a recorded interview between Brian Johnston, presenter of Down Your Way, and Stephen Young, editor of The Northern Scot published in Elgin. During their conversation, Stephen Young tries to give Brian Johnston a good general picture of the kind of place Elgin and the Moray area is — the things a visitor might expect to see and do, the sort of town Elgin is nowadays and what is interesting about the surrounding countryside.

Your task is to listen, to gather information, to pick up points so as to be able to write a report on Elgin and Moray as a holiday centre.

Before you listen — Write down 3 reasons you think a family might come to Moray for a holiday.

1.

Because there are amusements for all the family e.g the cooper park that has boats, trampolines, games etc.

2.

To visit the historical places - e.g. The cathedral

3.

Quiet and a lot of countryside resorts where some people haven't seen before.-very peaceful

Write down 3 reasons why they might **not.**

1.

because there are not many family resorts (they may not all like the same sport - fishing etc.)

2.

The cold weather.

3.

Because its just a normal town but slightly quieter.

During your 1st Listening — Jot down whether your reasons are mentioned in the interview or not (you can simply tick them off above).

After Listening — Now, write down any other reasons for or against what you have heard about or thought of.

The beaches around the coast - Lossie
Many distillerys > go whisky trails.
fishing in the rivers - Spey and many others.

2nd Listening

This should have given you a fairly good general idea of what to write in your report. It is now time to prepare for it in a more organized way. You will be given the chance to listen once more and to take notes. Before you listen you might find it useful to imagine the kind of people who might consider coming to Moray for a holiday — imagine it to be a 'typical' family consisting of the parents — 2 children, a 14 year old girl and a 12 year old boy perhaps. Think of the kind of questions they would want to ask about Moray to help them make up their minds to come or not. What do you think are the main points **they** would like to ask Stephen Young about? See if you can arrange some note headings out of these main points and use them for your own notetaking as you listen to the tape again. This will make you think about what Stephen Young says. But also remember **who** Stephen Young is and think about how **reliable** his advice is likely to be.

Before you tackle your report, try to answer these questions that our family might ask. Answer 'YES' or 'NO' and then try to give an explanation. If you think the interview did not deal with the question just put 'Don't know' instead.

A. 1. **Is there a nice quiet place in Elgin for us to relax in at odd moments during the holiday?**

Yes — Cooper Park, near centre, river nearby.
(I have done this first one to show you what to do in the rest!)

anything round brackets ( ) was not mentioned on tape.

2. **Will the kids be able to find anywhere nearby for swimming?**

Yes - beaches at Lossie etc (Elgin Swimming Baths).

3. Dad would describe himself as an 'outdoor' person — is there anything for him?

yes- golfing, fishing at the river spey. also whisky trails

4. Mum would like to visit a large city (bigger than Elgin) to do some shopping — how easy will this be for her?

Don't know.
(She could go to Inverness by train/bus/car).

5. The family have heard all about North Sea oil and are worried that Elgin might have become noisy and industrial. Are their worries right?

No

6. They all want to get a bit of a suntan during their fortnight. Will they be able to?

yes- at the beaches or

7. Can they go anywhere nice for picnics in the car?

yes - At forests out and about.
also Copper park or beach.

8. Is there anywhere really 'different' or special in Moray for the outside visitor to see?

yes- The distilleries

9. Tracy, the 14 year old daughter, wants to go somewhere 'lively' in the evening — is there anything for her?

yes- local community centre & arcade

---

1. The chauvanistic nature of these questions has subsequently been pointed out to me. Frequently.

10. **Although not great history enthusiasts, the family like to spend at least one afternoon on holiday visiting a 'really interesting' old house, castle, museum etc. Can Elgin offer them anything?**

Yes- The Cathedral.

11. **John, the son, is keen to have a try at skiing and has heard that Scotland is full of mountains. Is he going to find what he wants on this holiday?**

Yes- Aviemore, he would have to travel a bit to get there

B. **We hear from one person (not counting the interviewer, Brian Johnston) — Stephen Young.**

(a) **How do you think he feels about Moray as a family holiday centre?**

He feels its a very busy tourist area.

(b) **Can you remember any strong words he uses to desibe his opinion anywhere?**

(c) **Can you think of any question(s) Brian Johnston should have asked him about Moray as a holiday centre but didn't?**

- Are there any family activites
What Accomodation was like
" Weather " "

(d) **Give one reason why our family can trust Stephen Young's opinions on Moray as a holiday centre.**

He sounds quite sure and convincing

(e) **Give one reason why our family might not feel that he is giving them all they need to know about the matter.**

He doesn't give a wide enough range of activities that there are available in Elgin He also just gave half answers - he mentioned things but didn't explain

After. Imagine you have been investigating Moray as a family holiday centre for a holiday advice book. Write up your report. You might begin something like this:

'For the ordinary family, Elgin and the surrounding area of Moray is . . .'

A quiet and exotic place

LISTENING FOR INFORMATION (2)

Your task today will be to listen to a tape which tells us the story of Elgin Cathedral and then to write a brief history of the Cathedral of your own, using the information you will have gathered from the tape.

'Listening' and then having to write about it afterwards can be very difficult particularly when you have a lot of facts and names to sort out and to remember. An obvious way of helping with this problem is to **take notes** as you listen — but to get the best out of your notetaking you will need to be organized:—

1. Think about the kind of talk you are going to listen to. You know it's on history — will it contain lots of **dates and facts?** will it tell the **story** of the history of something? will it **explain** why certain things happened?

2. Then you will have to think about why you are listening to it. You know you will be expected to write your own history — do you need to remember everything? what are the most important bits to **select?** will the facts be **linked together** into a story or an explanation? is there a 'theme' for you to follow?

3. Then you can work out the best way of taking notes so as to help you gather the information you need for your history — will you be able to work out a good plan for your notes? arrange information under headings? put all these facts into a clear order?

Practice Tape

But all this is easier said than done! It will be a good idea to practise doing these three things **before** you try your Cathedral task. To give you this help, we are going to try out taking notes with another tape of history information — this time on the history of Elgin itself.

Imagine that I am playing you this tape so that you will be able to collect information to write a short history with the title 'The Growth of Elgin: from the Twelfth Century to The Present Day'! First we shall play it straight without any more introduction — listen to it and take notes if you like.

After your listening I shall ask you to try to write your history as best you can.

LISTENING FOR INFORMATION (Continued)

Perhaps you had problems in doing this! With so many facts and dates and comments it wouldn't be surprising if you got stuck or had to miss things out or even got some things wrong! Perhaps we can help ourselves by taking notes according to a suitable plan, aimed at helping you with the job you've been given. Remember you are listening to a series of facts arranged in a definite order of time; now and then the 'lecturer' will add an explanation or tell you why a certain fact is important — the 'significance' of the facts. Below is our suggested plan; we will now play the tape again and ask you to try to take notes using this plan. You should concentrate on filling in the 'Event' as you listen — you will be given time after listening to fill in the 'Significance'.

I've filled in the first 'Event' to show you how to carry on with the rest of the story.

THE DECLINE OF ELGIN CATHEDRAL[1]

Time	Event	Significance
1150	First mention of Elgin (1190)	Shows Elgin to be old town, early origins.
	Founded in 1224 by Bishop Andrew	Give age of the Cathedral.
1250		
1350	Fire after wolf burned. Alexander Stuart Lord of Badenoch	The first in the series of blows which lead to the ruin of cathedral
1450	Restored	
1550	Anarchy in Scotland: Cathedral poorly maintained. Lead removed from roof	The main event which lead to the ruin.
1650	Central tower falls.	The cathedral is now ruined.
	Stone allowed to be removed	It can never be completed restored to its original condition.
1750		
1850		
1950		
2000		

1. Pupils were allowed to use the 'practice' model for their 'Cathedral' listening.

The Elgin Cathedral Tape — you will have a 1st Listening **before** the second notetaking one.

1st Listening — after you have listened you will be asked to jot down answers to these questions:—

(a) What would you see if you visited Elgin Cathedral today? Can you think of any words to describe it?

(b) How did it get that way? Name 3 reasons.

a) In 1390 Alexander Stuart (The Wolf of Badenoch) set fire to the cathedral after quarelling with the Bishop.
b) In the mid sixteenth century the privvy council in Edinburgh ordered the removal of the lead. This lead to the collapse of the central tower and most of the building
c) Prior to the removal of the lead, due to the turbulence in Scotland at that time, the cathedral was poorly maintained

(c) Who/What was to blame?

There was no single person to blame but the main people, the Wolf of Badenoch, the Privvy council and also the people of Elgin for the removal of the stones and the neglect.

2nd Listening — answering these questions should have given you the gist of the Cathedral's story and also the main reasons why it is now 'a magnificent ruin'.

Now it is time for some planned notetaking to prepare you for your task.

Before re-listening plan out your notetaking page — you will then listen and have 10 minutes at the end to review your notes, fill in gaps, add explanations, etc.

Now listen and take notes!

LISTENING TO STORIES (1)

Today you are going to listen to a story that will be read out to you on cassette. This time you will not be asked to take notes while you listen; instead I want you to do some **predicting** — to listen carefully to how the story seems to be developing and to try to work out what you think is going to happen next.

I will play the tape to you but at certain important points in the story I will stop the recording and ask you to use the worksheet to fill in **your** answers to a few questions about what has been happening up to that point and then about what you think is going to happen next — a **prediction exercise.** Don't think of your answer as **the** right or **the** wrong one — although the author will develop the story one way you might well come up with a good alternative — indeed you might think your 'solution' is actually better than the 'real' one given in the story!

But, of course, you should try to listen carefully so as to make your prediction as interesting and as well thought out as possible — and this means listening out for likely 'clues': how the story-line (the **plot**) has been developing up to that point: what the main **character** (the **hero**) is trying to do and what difficulties he is facing; what the other **characters** he meets are like; whether the **description** contains any significant, tell-tale details.

The Story

The story is called 'The Mystery of the Beehive'. I know from the Programme Notes that it is about a boy called Brendan. Brendan comes from Belfast and the story tells how he goes to spend a holiday on his uncle's farm in Scotland. It is the first time he has ever met his uncle or ever been away from home by himself before. While he is on his uncle's farm he encounters the strange Mr. Swegensov and thus becomes involved in — the mystery of the beehive!

		Will happen	Like to read about
(a)	Brendan will find out about beekeeping and discover what an interesting activity it is.		
(b)	Brendan will discover that his uncle's farm and beehives are the centre for a criminal group.		
(c)	Brendan will find out that Mr. Swegensov is breeding a race of killer bees.		
(d)	Brendan will try to investigate the beehives and will be dangerously attacked by the bees.		
(e)	Brendan will solve 'the mystery' and return to Belfast a hero.		
(f)	None of these — my suggestion is —		

What I would like to read is —

The Beginning of the Story

I will play the first few minutes which introduce the story to us and also the main character Brendan.

After listening to this beginning fill in answers to these questions:

(a) Why is the whole holiday a bit of a mystery to Brendan?

He is leaving his native country to go to a strange country to stay with an uncle he has never met before.

**(b) How does he feel on leaving home?

He feels lonely and a bit sad. Also he feels he is being made to leave.

**(c) Can you recall any words or phrases that sum up his feelings?

'loneliness', 'exiled'.

The Middle of the Story

I will stop the story at 3 crucial moments — at each one Brendan is on the verge of puzzling out the mystery and is just about to make out a plan for solving it. See if you can guess what is going to happen by answering the questions for each of the 3 stages:—

Stage One

(a) What is puzzling Brendan at this stage?

*(b) What do you think he feels about Mr. Swegensov?

(c) What will Brendan do next?

(d) What will happen?

Stage Two

(a) What does Brendan want to find out now?

Brendan wants to find out whats in the canvas bag now.

(b) What will he do to find out?

He will probably go up to Mr. Swegensov's room while he's out and look for the bag + maybe try to take it away or take the contents out.

(c) What dangers does he face from Mr. Swegensov?

He faces the danger of Mr. Swegensov coming back + finding him looking in the bag. Mr. Swegensov will propably be very angry if he finds him. and chase him

(d) What will happen?

Mr. Swegensov will probably chase him and try and get the bag back

Stage Three

(a) What do you think the mystery of the beehives is?

I think it might something precious like jewels or gold.

***(b) What will Mr. Swegensov do?

Mr. Swegensov will try and get the bag away from Brendan to stop him looking whats inside

(c) What will happen?

Brendan will run away with the bag to his aunt + uncle and they will report the contents to Police.

Now I will play to the end and you can find out how clever you've been!

The End of the Story

Now you have found out all the answers! I wonder if you were able to guess 'the mystery' at any earlier point? Were you disappointed with the actual solution? Have you learned anything from this story **apart** from 'the mystery of the beehives'?

1. Look at your answers to the 'Before Listening' section and fill in your answers to these questions:—

   (a) Did the story go the way you forecast it might at the start?
   (Write Yes/No) NO.

   (b) If 'No' would the things you expected or wanted to happen have made this

      (i) a more exciting story?

      (ii) a better 'mystery' story? YES.

   (c) If 'Yes' to (b) would more 'excitement' and more 'mystery' have made this a **better** story?
   YES.

2. Possibly you answered 'no' to (a) and 'Yes' to (b)! However although you might not think a lot of the story as a straight 'mystery' story that the title seemed to promise, it could be that 'The Mystery of the Beehives' is still a good and interesting story if we think about the **people** in the story and not just the **plot.** Think about the 'mystery' again — it's not just the 'mystery' of the beehives that gets solved, is it? Brendan discovers the mystery of Mr. Swegensov.

   Look at the answer you gave on Mr. Swegensov in 'The Middle of the Story' Stage One when you were asked 'What do you think Brendan feels about Mr. Swegensov now.' (It's the question marked *).

   Now answer this question —

   (a) How do you think Brendan feels about Mr. Swegensov at the end of the story?
   I think he feels sorry for him & also ashamed ~~sorry~~ that he ever ~~thee~~ thought him bad and that he was sorry he tried so find out about the contents of the bag.

   Look at the answer you gave to 'The Beginning of the Story' (b) and (c) when I ask about Brendan's feelings on leaving home in Belfast and how the story describes them (They're marked **).

   Now answer this question —

   (b) Do you see any way in which Brendan and Mr. Swegensov are alike?
   Yes, Brendan and Mr. Swegensov both feel really lonely and also Mr Swegensov was exiled and Brendan felt as if he had been exiled

   So much for Brendan — what did you learn about Mr. Swegensov that **surprised** you? Look at the answer you gave to 'The Middle of the Story' Stage Three when I ask what will Mr. Swegensov do? (It's marked ***).

   (c) Did you guess right? — (Yes/No) NO

   (d) If 'No' do you think Mr. Swegensov showed himself to be a better man than you thought? — (Yes/No)
   YES.

   Now lastly think about this final question and try to work out an answer to it:

   What have you learned about people from this story?

   I have learned that you shouldn't judge people by their appearances. Mr. Swegensov looked bad and sinister so Brendan thought that contents of the ^the ^bag also were illegal and bad too but really Mr. Swegensov was a very nice, sad ^old man.

LISTENING TO RESPOND

'The Great Storm'

The passage you are about to hear is called 'The Great Storm'. It is a dramatised version of the first chapter in John Prebble's book **The High Girders** which tells the true story of the Tay Bridge Disaster.

As you will hear, the bridge collapsed during the stormy winter's night of December 28, 1879. Although the weather was very bad, the Tay bridge had only been opened for 18 months and was regarded as a great piece of modern engineering that the people of Dundee could feel very proud of. You can imagine their feelings of shock when they woke up on the morning of December 29, 1879 to discover what had happened.

We should like you to try to imagine the story they would have read in the Dundee Courier newspaper for that day! More than this, imagine yourself to be a reporter gathering information to write that story — the questions you would ask the witnesses, the words you would use to describe the weather and the bridge, the facts you would need to get clear about what happened, how you would write up your story so as to bring out the drama of it all.

Note-Taking

We are now going to ask you to listen to the tape with these things in mind. It can, of course, be very difficult to gather in all the information you need simply by listening; usually we have to take notes to help us **capture** the most important details while the piece of listening is going on. This is what you will have to do on this occasion, but first think about how you can get the best out of your listening — you will need to be clear about what you are doing and you will need to plan out how you are going to take your notes.

To start with you should think about **exactly** what you have to do:—

Your first task here is to gather information for a newspaper story and this will mean getting the basic facts right — the time, the place, the conditions, who was involved and so on. Therefore, you will want to take a note of these things as you get the chance.

But it will be no use just trying to scrawl down everything and anything while the tape is playing — that way you will only end up with a jumble of not always accurate bits and pieces, some of which might have little to do with your main first purpose which is simply to get the essential facts right. To prevent yourself getting in a muddle and to make sure you do get the points you really need for your story, you will have to gather the information in an organized way, to work out a plan for your note-taking.

1st Listening — Note-taking: Facts

To do this, think first of all of the main types of facts you will need to discover for your newspaper report. Then arrange them as headings on your notetaking pad. Once you've done this you can quickly jot down the details against the appropriate heading as you listen, or as you remember them afterwards.

Remember, in this case, you already know the basic story — the Tay Bridge in the year 1879 is blown down in a storm, with a train on it; you are listening to this taped account in order to fill in the main details — to do this we think you will need the headings written out for you on the next page.

We are now going to play the tape straight through; listen to it and take notes under the headings we suggest. You will also have time afterwards to try to remember any details you miss copying down straightaway.

Basic Facts

Time:

Sun. Dec. 28TH 1879 ~~[illegible]~~ 7:20 pm.

Place:

The Fifth of Tay Bridge, and Station

Conditions:

strong gales, rain, wind from a ~~north~~ south-westerly direction. Heavy cloud cover.

People Involved/Witnesses:

Thomas Buckley, 75 men women and children travelling on the train John Wark.

The Tay Bridge:

Said to be the best construction of all time but it really isn't made up to a good enough standard. (Made from latticed iron)

What happens —
Before

- The train speeds up on the bridge and suddenly must have slammed on the brakes, because there were sparks and a big flash.

During

The bridge crumples like paper and the train plunges down to the water below.

After/Result

The train crashed into the cold, rough water below killing 75 people. Everyone perished. People flocked to the bridge in the morning to see what had happened.

Description

(The men have to shout to make themselves heard.)

The wind was drumming on the new Tay Bridge *

(Train came round the bend described as a flash against the darkness)

(Regulation speed ~~after~~ going onto bridge: 3 mph.)

Bridge described as black and swaying with flickering lights along the sides. *

Bridge described as black and menacing..

Train leaves at 5:20 p.m.

You should now have enough points to tell at least some of the story of the Tay Bridge Disaster. However, the tape doesn't just give us the facts; it tries to make them exciting by using vivid description and strong acting and sounds — to help give you a picture of what it was like to be there on that night in 1879. And a good newspaper reporter won't just write up facts either — he will also try to make his story dramatic by the way he writes up his story. So you will need to add description to the facts you've so far collected. Again, planned note-taking can help you to pick out the things you need — this time not the facts by themselves but the way they are described or acted out on the tape.

2nd Listening — Note-taking: Description

You have got the facts — now we want you to try to collect enough description points to make these facts dramatic. You will get a second chance to listen and to take notes. Use the page you half-filled in doing the first listening; now try to find some good description from the taped story to put down for the facts you filled in first time round — put these description points in the right-hand column headed 'Description'. Again you will have time afterwards to finish filling in from memory.

Now use all these notes to try to write up your newspaper story!

CHAPTER SEVEN

NOTES TOWARDS THE TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT OF GROUP TALK

SUMMARY OUTLINE

1. Initial Problems

One can only be tentative in an area which has such hard teaching and assessment problems to solve: group talk offers us no individual pupil product to work directly upon or teach towards, and individual assessment must be problematic in what is by definition a corporate venture.

Obviously some initial simplification is called for. Thus our teaching and assessment have to be concentrated on those aspects of group work at the preparation and review stages where the pupils' contribution may be seen to take a more individual form. If we cannot control the actual flow of group discussion once underway, we can at least ensure that it is set up properly, that participants are given firm roles and remits, and are charged with the responsibility of producing some decision, report or evaluative review which individual members may give account of.

2. Group Skills

'Skills' are therefore defined into the manageable form of individual performance, which may be shaped beforehand and inferred by the ability to turn it into a retrospective account. To this end, four essential **roles** are suggested — contributor, moderator (taking others' views into account), initiator and chairman. These may be identified with the pupil, discussed and then rehearsed and reviewed.

3. Group Activities

These skills are to be developed within activity areas derived from our Chapter 3 (and Guidelines) set of 'purposes', each one of which is taken here and made to generate suitable group tasks (e.g. 'Information' giving us 'to plan an itinerary').

4. Assessment

This may now be based on the individual's ability to act out a group role in the attempted fulfilment of his group activity task. The role will have to be testified to by demanding of the pupil in it that he offer some oral account — to act as a major speaker, to summarise, answer queries etc. It may be possible to supplement evidence collected here, after the group talk is over, by impressionistic observation, according to a checklist of questions, of individual behaviour within the group.

5. Examples

Reference is made to one experiment in the 'formative assessment' of group talk where pupils are prepared for a discussion in a briefing session with the teacher which forms the basis for a post-group talk review of the ensuing performance. An actual example carrying a similar preparatory discussion-performance-review-format, but this time according to a detailed checklist, at Westhill Academy is also included. Finally a suggested **'Listening** to Group Talk' activity is put forward in a worksheet form that attempts to relate group talks to the concerns of Chapter 6.

Tape Extracts referred to: Nos. 20-21.

1. Initial Problems

The value of group discussion as an aid towards the assimilation of new ideas, and the working out of clearer understanding, has now become widely accepted. The result is that, increasingly, English teachers have come to build into their teaching programmes regular opportunities for pupils to talk things over or to plan some joint project. The ideal of the well-balanced oral syllabus means, however, that we must take the matter even further and not simply exploit group talk as a general classroom strategy, but must also try to teach the oral skills required and — what is even more to the point — attempt to carry out assessments of each pupil's acquisition of them. Indeed, the Guidelines state that Talk Purpose Number 5 is 'to work, in a group, towards a common purpose'.

Clearly, the associated teaching and assessment demands are going to be difficult to meet, even more so than in the case of solo-audience or one-to-one formats. At least in these two instances talk is observable as an individual activity; in a group setting, discussion will quickly merge into an interactive blur, so that any one pupil's efforts will become intermingled with those of others to a degree where it will become not only impracticable but seem quite inappropriate to extract out any single contribution. Moreover, any actual group is liable to develop a shared identity so that, for example, the member who tacitly conveys support by gesture and expression might well be playing a valuable communal role as the 'good listener'. In fact, many of the most valued qualities in this situation will be non-verbal ones as interpersonal skills, sympathies even, are called into play. The result is that group talk is always liable to dip down below the level of visible teaching control, and, likewise, refuse to reveal the kind of hard, discrete evidence most useable in assessment.

It must be confessed that all this makes it difficult to be other than tentative in remarking on this topic: all we can offer at this stage in its development, are some 'notes' which may at least help to clarify the issues and to outline the possibilities involved.

As with so many aspects of oral work, the first step must be to try to reduce the matter to manageable proportions, even if at the expense of over-simplifying the complex nature of the talk process. It would seem unlikely, for example, that we shall easily be able to put the finger of our teaching and assessment methods on to the very flow of shared, group talk once it is in motion. Instead, we shall have to settle for catching hold of it where we can, and that would seem to be what occurs at the very start and at the very end of the proceedings: if we cannot account for the process itself, we can at least exert some control over what goes into and what we ask to come out of the group discussion.

Teaching might well have to concentrate upon setting up the talk in a certain way and on giving the participants specific roles to play and clear remits to follow. Pupil progress might then be aided by teacher-pupil discussion that could take the form of a preview of what is to be done and a look back at what has actually occurred; assessment would be achieved by carrying out an examination of how well individuals are able to report on what happened, perhaps by the delivery of summaries to the class audience. Similarly, group skills may be shaped by treating them as the carrying out of distinct roles such as acting as chairman or reporter-back, while the nature of the in-group performance can be inferred by the pupil's ability to make some individual use of the collaborative talk. Our so-called 'good listener' will, for example, have to testify to the quality of his listening by offering the rest of us a comprehending and sensitively-balanced summing up.

2. Group Skills

A simplification of group skills into tasks and roles is, in fact, implicit in the Guidelines account of the assessable criteria for this oral 'purpose'. Here is what it has to say as a definition of performance levels at Grade 2:

> *'The candidate will contribute purposefully to the discussion and will moderate his views in response to the statements and initiatives of others. He will show a capacity to take an initiative or pursue his own view; when in a chairing role, he will work to achieve consensus'.*

It is possible to extract four aspects of behaviour from this description, with the result that the pupil's skills may indeed become to be seen as a capacity to play certain parts **within** a group:

(i) **As contributor.** The group effort becomes an opportunity to make a 'purposeful' **contribution.**

(ii) **As moderator.** The ability to collaborate with fellow group members is inferred by the degree to which the individual can show he is able to **take others' views into account.**

(iii) **As initiator.** He will be expected to play a vigorous part in proceedings, but this may be viewed as the making of certain **initiatives.**

(iv) **As Chairman.** The capacity for organising discussion in respect of the needs of the group as a whole will be demonstrated by the undertaking of specific roles, especially that of **chairmanship.**

3. Group Activities

If group skills are to be viewed as the performance of certain roles, the classroom activities which may be introduced in order to further them can be treated as tasks. These will be derived from the Guidelines' fundamental notion of language purposes, in much the same way as we used 'An Oral Syllabus guideline' to generate classwork for solo and one-to-one in Chapter 3.

Purpose	Group Purpose	Class Work (suggestions)
Information	To brief fellow group members To make joint presentation of information to others To collaborate in joint investigation/research	to study data (a route plan, holiday literature); plan (itineraries, procedures); report findings (on topics, queries set by others; to work out description of activities, rules of games, unfamiliar objects).
Instruction	To work out and present plans, programmes, procedures	to convert work done on **information** into sets of instructions; discuss and decide presentation; work at set problems (such as designing a room, a game, a route); interpreting and representing others' (especially commercial) instructions.
Persuasion	To make a decision To clarify issues and present summaries to others	to predict (endings to stories); to debate controversies, new proposals; compare and contrast opinions; adopt/reject others' proposals; draft manifesto/set of rules; to recommend (a film, TV programme, visit).
Entertainment	To exchange experiences To collaborate in performance	to discuss others' points of view (in certain situations — 'how would you feel if you were . . .?'); to exchange anecdotes, responses on topic, story, film; to prepare, rehearse and present dramatic performance.

4. Assessment

This can now be summarised as the ability to play an observable part in the group's handling of given tasks. Inevitably, much of our assessment will be directed to the individual's performance at those stages in the task which take place immediately after and as a result of group discussion: how succinctly he sums up the ground covered; with what clarity he is able to present group decisions or findings; the sensitivity towards others' views that he demonstrates in the balance and tone of his account.

It may also be possible to learn something from direct observation of the group at work, combined perhaps with the occasional visit into it when the teacher may question group members as to what is going on, who is saying what, who agrees with whom, and so on. This kind of impressionistic evidence will be of the 'personal evaluation' kind described in the assessment Strategy outlined in Chapter 5, and is to be commended by making the same point: that is that although not 'reliable', such assessment has its value in allowing us to catch aspects of oral work not otherwise accountable for and thus to add it to our overall profile. Informal observation may thus complement the stricter record of task performance to be gained by an appraisal of role performance.

Points towards assessment in each of these now follow:

(a) **By task performance:**

(ascertained by outcome, usually by asking for subsequent report)

(i) **Contributor.** Act as major speaker to propose/oppose viewpoints; to act as interviewer who questions speakers on points of view; to present specific opinion on information.

(ii) **Moderator.** Give well-balanced account of others' or whole-group views, which can support argument with evidence, match arguments and counter arguments, take up and develop others' points.

(iii) **Initiator.** Make initial proposals; suggest lines of discussion, investigation for group to follow, outline next steps.

(iv) **Chairman.** Lead discussion, sum up, manage contributions, take notes, identify issues discussed and views held.

(b) **By observation:**

(carried out while in progress)

Who speaks to whom, how often, when, at length?

Who is silent, how often, how long?

Who appears to be initiator, who is passive?

Who seems to be co-operating with others?

Who is seeking to dominate or opt out?

Who does the answering when questions are asked of the group?

How do members respond when an 'outsider' visits a group in progress?

5. Examples

Not surprisingly, perhaps, we have found few examples of school activity designed to work directly on group skills in the ways suggested in the preceding section. Jim Duffin of Our Lady's High School, Motherwell, has, however, produced an interesting videotape in collaboration with St Andrew's College of Education, in which he demonstrates how a set of pupils may be involved in a cycle of preview-group discussion-review so that they will gain some formative insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their own contributions to the total group effort. What he does is to give four S4 pupils the remit of discussing the merits and Scottish relevance of the standard set of school rules that Russian children are made to observe. The discussion is first of all led off by the teacher himself who stays with the group long enough to suggest lines of argument, ways of tackling issues and, in general, to act as an implicit model for handling group talk. He then hands over the chair to one of the pupils, in order to absent himself from the scene completely only to return after a further half-hour to carry out a review with the group of their performance. At this point two basic questions are followed: did the discussion deepen your understanding? Did everyone get an opinion across? The example makes for lively viewing and the sense of pupil commitment and awareness conveyed are sufficient to suggest that guided self-evaluation might well be a promising pattern to follow in the furtherance of group skills.

Jim Duffin's tape has to be seen. In the meantime we can offer extracts from an audiotape example of a similar approach being followed, this time at Westhill Academy, near Aberdeen. This school has made a thoroughgoing attempt both to employ and to enhance group discussion as an integral feature of all its English work. In this instance we can drop in on four S3 pupils tackling topics within their 'What is a Teenager?' unit, and then evaluating their own performance in the light of group discussion criteria already introduced to the class as a whole. In **Tape Extracts 20 and 21** we can catch extracts from each phase of this operation. In the first of these the group are in the midst of discussing adult-teenage relationships, and then in the second we hear them reviewing their talk. Below are reprinted from the unit material, the 'reminder' instructions on the conduct of group discussion; the topics to be worked through; the assessment criteria used by the pupils.

GROUP WORK:

YOUR TEACHER WILL remind you what is meant by group work.

In your group you should read and study the short poem and the Adult and Teenage Views carefully. Someone might volunteer to read: you might share the reading: you might all read and study the material silently. BE HELPFUL! If you are a good reader, help those who are less sure!

In your group you should choose someone to check round the group, getting each person's views and reactions.

In your group you should find out each person's views and reactions concerning adolescent, adults, teenagers.

In your group you should be prepared to report to the whole class the views of your group when required.

REMEMBER — everyone writes up the group's findings.

REMEMBER — everyone takes a turn at reporting.

1. ***DISCUSS ADOLESCENCE.*** *What are each person's feelings about being an adolescent? Do people feel different, more easily embarrassed, more/less energetic, misunderstood, "picked-on", more/less mature?????*

2. ***DISCUSS ADULTS.*** *What are each person's views here? Do adults, parents and others lack understanding and tolerance? Do they refuse to accept times have changed? Do they interfere too much?*

3. ***DISCUSS TEENAGERS AND TEENAGERS' BEHAVIOUR.*** *Again, what are the views of each person? Are teenagers selfish, spoilt and ill-mannered?*

REPORTING ON THE GROUP WORK:

BE PREPARED to report to the class the views of your group on the three group work topics.

REMEMBER — each person in the group will be involved in reporting.

INDIVIDUAL WRITING ON THE GROUP WORK:

WRITE a paragraph on each of the following:—

1. ***My*** *views about adolescence.*
2. ***My*** *views about adults.*
3. ***My*** *views about teenagers.*

ASSESSING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. *CLARITY*	:	*Was it clear or indistinct?* *Was that the fault of the equipment or position round microphone?* *Could some people speak more clearly and distinctly?*
2. *FLUENCY*	:	*Was the discussion fluent, flowing?* *Was there a lot of stopping and starting, switching on and off?*
3. *CONTENT*	:	*Was the discussion full and detailed, complete?* *Was it too brief and lacking in detail and explanations?*
4. ***GROUP CO-OPERATION***	:	*Well organised? Did the organiser ensure that everyone got a turn?* *Too many interruptions?* *One person dominating?* *Someone not bothering? Not trying? Not able to contribute?* *Could you help others to contribute?* *Picking up points made by others?* *Listening to others?* *Responding to others?* *Adding fresh points?*
5. ***GENERAL/OVERALL IMPRESSIONS***	:	*Was it an interesting and lively discussion?*

The practice-review sequence illustrated here opens up a further possibility and that is the use of **listening** to group discussions in order to gain practical insights into the processes involved. Here we could follow the pattern suggested in the Listening chapter (indeed, listening to group debate could well be considered as an item in the Listening Syllabus, perhaps as 'listening to do, to come to a decision'). The procedure would be to ask pupils to attend to a group discussion on a topic of mutual interest, in order to evaluate the content and quality of what they hear. The general questions to tackle would be: 'What did you learn?' Did these pupils agree with your opinion? How well did they argue their case?' On the following pages is included a worksheet made up along these lines, using the Westhill discussion as our example. (As with the Chapter 6 examples, the teaching pattern is worked out into a complete and heavily structured assignment to provide a complete account of the pattern to be followed. Naturally, under class conditions, many of these points could be dealt with orally by teacher and pupil together, and time taken to select and discuss the most relevant ones).

WORKSHEET EXAMPLE

Listening to Discussion

This time we are going to listen to a **discussion.** On the tape you will hear four 14 year olds talking about 'teenagers', their behaviour and the opinions adults have of them. As you might expect, several different points are made as the various speakers put forward their own views and discuss what each other has to say.

Your job will be to pick out the main **points of view** and also to decide how well the group have managed to carry out their discussions.

Therefore, I will ask you to do these listening tasks:

Before Listening

First of all I want to know what your opinion of teenagers and adults is! On the accompanying sheet of paper you can find some of the things that teenagers and adults have been known to say about each other. Read these comments over and then answer these discussion points below:

(Tick the right column for you: try to add a reason, or example, for your opinion in the space provided after each question).

					ON THE WHOLE
1.	**ADULTS**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Undecided**	**Group**
a)	Adults — parents and others — don't understand teenagers:				
	Reason:				
b)	They don't show any tolerance towards teenagers:				
	Reason:				
c)	They refuse to accept times have changed:				
	Reason:				
2.	**TEENAGERS**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Undecided**	**Group**
a)	Most of them are spoilt and selfish:				
	Reason:				
b)	They are often aggressive and rude:				
	Reason:				
c)	Their appearance and clothing frequently leave a lot to be desired:				
	Reason:				

After 1st Listening

a) Now look at the points of view you listed above — how did the group on the tape fit in with your opinion? In the 'Group' column put the appropriate letter A (Agree), D (disagree), U (Undecided) — think of what the group as a whole seemed to think.

b) Did they give any of your reasons? Tick any that were mentioned by the group.

c) Jot down any other points or reasons that now occur to you after listening to the group's discussion of adults and teenagers.

After 2nd Listening

Now I want you to decide how well the group discussed these points. Look at the following questions, listen carefully (you can jot down any quick note while you do so in the spaces provided). After the tape is finished look at the questions again and any notes you've made. Now try to fill in your verdicts (give examples where you can):

a) Did they bring out any good points?

Note

Verdict

b) Did they leave any important points out?

Note

Verdict

c) Did they seem to have good reasons for their views?

Note

Verdict

d) Did they argue clearly?

Note

Verdict

e) Did they make any weak points?

Note

Verdict

f) Were they reasonable in what they said?

Note

Verdict

Final Verdict

Imagine you are an adult listening to these young teenagers' discussion.

a) What would you have learned about teenagers?

b) What would you have learned about the way they think about you?

c) Would you have been impressed with what they had to say?

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN CONCLUSION: THE ORAL CURRICULUM

One conclusion emerges above all others. While we may teach the pupil certain oral skills by direct methods his general development will depend upon the kind of learning environment we can create in the school. Many factors will be involved, not all of them under the control of the English Department. All that we can suggest here are some aspects of general policy:

(a) We must nurture the individual pupil's natural capacity for lively, informal talk by encouraging it so that we may develop and not just instruct. Two concentric cycles of learning are implied: there is the small-scale movement from personal and open conversation to specific task-related productions that may have to take place at every new syllabus step that the pupil has to negotiate. There is also the larger, long-term progress towards accomplishment in talk that will be guided by the gradual intensification of demand made upon him as he moves through his school career.

(b) Consequently, oral work must become a visible part of the syllabus from Secondary 1. Indeed it must be regarded as a continuation of Primary experience.

(c) It will be important to raise the pupil's own awareness of the value placed upon his talk and his listening. This will be achieved by giving him the chance to speak and to respond to others' talk as frequently as we can, not as a formal event but as a day-to-day expectation. Similarly, we must involve his interest in his own oral work as we now seek to do in his writing and reading. Techniques such as self and peer assessment may play a significant part here.

(d) Oral material must be used in the same regular classroom way as written texts are at present. Pupils should come to regard the talk that they hear from adults, from each other, and also from the media, as constituting just as much a rich source of comment on human experience, as much a 'literature', as what is to be found between the covers of a book.

(e) The full potential of the school and of the community must be exploited to give significant and real oral opportunities. Adults with something to say should be invited into the classroom or visited in their own environment. School staff will have a rich stock of stories, experiences and points of view ready to be unlocked by the right invitation, the appropriate pupil interview.

(f) Oral work must be treated as an integral part of English work. Efforts ought to be made, as a matter of course, to build in a talk and listening phase in the class's treatment of any unit acitivity, whether it be simply a group discussion of the theme and content of a short story leading to individual writing, or a full scale class debate on a related issue.

(g) If Talk and Listening activity are to become an organic part of school life, then serious consideration must be given to the kind of teaching strategies normally employed within the classroom. In particular, both group work and team teaching ought to become regular features, not as exclusive methods, but as part of the total repertoire.

(h) Clearly, approaches such as these — for many, an innovation — carry implications for the organisation of classroom and timetable resources as well as for the deployment of staff. This means that ultimately the school as a whole will have a responsibility both to enable and then to support such changes as the English Department may feel it has to make in order to create a rich and varied oral curriculum.

(i) Indeed, when we use the term 'oral curriculum', we are really talking about the learning environment as a whole and the kind of culture it creates both for the pupil and the teacher. It would be advantageous for the school to have a policy on the role of pupil talk and listening across the whole range of subjects and experiences it offers. Might it be helpful to re-activate some of the energies that went into the attempt to establish (Oral) Language across the Curriculum several years ago?

School Experience — Some Final Examples

Here we can only give a glimpse of the kind of day-to-day action that a school might take to provide the essential context in which any formal oral syllabus may proceed. In **Tape Extract 22** you will hear a teacher talking with a group of 4th year 'Foundation' pupils concerning their class work on Barry Hines' **Kes.** A common enough occasion and a common enough book, but worth listening to here, because of the sensitive and yet progressive way in which this teacher handles the group's talk. If pupils really are to develop articulateness and the assurance that must go with it, then they must have, not simply practice, the nourishing experience of talking to a real adult listener, someone who is prepared to encourage yet to insist, a fellow talker who has the deftness and the sensitivity to help his pupils believe that they have something to say and to achieve their own clarity in the telling of it. What could have broken down into a staccato question-answer routine here becomes a genuine movement towards explanation as the teacher participates in their attempts to make connections, to piece together a real response to the topic.

One of our most vital functions, perhaps more important than the orderly monitoring of talk performances, will be to offer our pupils the right kind of audience, for speech is as much a matter of relationships and situations as it is of purposes and structures. The teacher will be the most important source of adult audience for the pupil, but there should also be an attempt to construct units of work which involve an exploration of people, places and activities through the medium of speech as well as those of reading and writing. **Tape**

Extract 23 offers two related examples of what might be done. In the first part you will hear the voice of a 3rd year pupil at an Aberdeen school interviewing a local fisherwife about the old days 'at the fish', thus adding the living information received at the lips of this woman to the various written and visual materials on the topic that have been dealt with in class, where a Local Study Unit has been in operation.

The speech situation is a genuine one and the words come with a force of authenticity that makes this oral text just as valuable a source of insight as any book account. Posing interview questions, however, is quite a mature skill requiring sufficient poise to depart from a prepared script and, not surprisingly, the pupil confines herself to a fairly muted role. Although the occasion has been a worthwhile experience, other opportunities may have to be offered within the same stretch of classwork for pupils to talk. In this instance members of the same class were also asked to do some role-play, prepared for by examining shots of old fishing scenes, then discussing the details of life to be inferred from the detail caught by the photographer, after which they were invited to work up a self-portrait through monologue that might be spoken by any one of these pictured characters. In the second part of **Tape Extract 23** you can listen to one such offering and appreciate, I think, the vivid possibilities opened up by role-play for pupils to develop fluency of oral performance. In this instance the opportunity to assume another, and perhaps warmer dialect voice, appears to have been a liberating one, freeing the speaker from the inhibitions of direct personal exposure, yet at the same time enabling him to follow a real communicative purpose. Perhaps role-play may act as a valuable stage towards the fulfilment of some such talk purpose as given here, an informative speech on the subject of 'Fishing in pre-war Aberdeen'.

The ideal is to involve the pupil in a wide and frequently-repeated variety of talk and listening situations as he moves through his English course. In **Tape Extract 24** you will catch one S2 pupil busy at the kind of talk that is a regular part of his school life. He is a pupil at Westhill Academy, near Aberdeen, where the English Department has made a point of using activities such as group discussion, interview, role-play and class debate as normal aspects of all syllabus work from Secondary 1 onwards. In the first of the three snatches that make up this extract, you will hear him in the middle of an interview with a member of the school staff on topics raised by work in an 'Animals' unit. As is often the case with this age group, he is still feeling his way into this kind of set activity (asking a series of questions of an adult is a rather daunting task for most young pupils), and his performance is a little stilted, but the experience of working with a mature speaker who takes his questions seriously enough to give him a full and vigorous response must be an educative one.

In any case, the opportunity to investigate the issues raised by unit work through interview (as well as the more traditional Reading mode) is only one of a whole diversity of oral activities that this pupil can expect to encounter during his school week. As the other two items that make up the Tape Extract show, he will also be involved in more creative and also less formal talk where he can explore a topic in open discussion with his peers or can let himself go in the improvisation of a part. So, we can now hear him engaged in a group discussion of the poem 'Arithmetic' by Gavin Ewart, for him a familiar experience, since group work is built into a standard classroom routine of text presentation to whole class; group response to set questions; reporting back; whole class discussion. Lastly, we can drop in on another common feature of his class life, the acting out of a role in order to dramatise an issue raised by a topic. Here he takes the part of the middle-aged husband in order to voice his thoughts on the talking point of 'then and now', along with his 'wife' (although less full-bodied in his talk than his partner, he still has things to say, and perhaps we can think of his relatively constrained tones as a subtle interpretation of his long-married husband's role!).

These taped extracts give some small flavour — it can only be that — of pupil experience in a school where abundant oral activity is a routine part of English syllabus life. Indeed here informal pupil talk is treated as the basis on which to develop more structured language (including oral) production, a fact that is built into the very methodology of a classroom where group discussion and 'talking things over' are regarded as every bit as important as note-taking and text-book research. This is a system that begins from the very first day of Secondary 1 so that pupils will be given every chance to mature quite naturally as speakers and listeners. That this abundance of oral experience does have this desired effect is — in my opinion, at least — borne out by the more assured and practised performance that the same pupil makes a year later as a Secondary 3 pupil chairing the group discussion that you will already have heard as Chapter 7 Tape Extracts 20 and 21.

HearSay is meant to be a practical document. In it we have attempted not to discuss a theory but to investigate possible courses of teaching action. It was with this end in view that the 'English teaching model' was put forward in Chapter 2 as the basis of our researches where, to put it briefly, Talk and Listening were approached as simply constituting two more areas of language practice to put alongside Reading and Writing and therefore to be thought of as being subject to the same general teaching style of stimulus — first production — rehearsal — final production — assessment. Yet, as we tried in subsequent chapters to think the logic of this strategy through and to find examples with which to demonstrate it, another and perhaps more shadowy picture has emerged to complicate this clear outline. Again to summarise matters, it became evident that speech can be thought of not only as a demonstration of a particular competence in a specific situation, but also as an expression of a personal development in which the quality of the individual's talk experiences and of the kind of relationship that his speech has enabled him to enjoy with others will play a vital part. Or, to put it another way, Talk is not **just** Writing that is spoken aloud, nor is Listening to it merely a matter of Reading a heard text.

Tape Extracts 22-24.

This is not to discard the structure of our Guidelines-derived model. The problem, as always, is to find ways of combining the two versions into a more complete and effective teaching whole. The Guidelines are, after all, a series of working principles and pointers, a framework for all the modes rather than a detailed prescription for the exact kind of work that ought to be carried out in any one of them. Those general ideas which inform it, its advocacy of teaching by putting the pupil through the formative experience of attempting to meet the language demands made by specific activities which embody real communicative purposes, remain both conceptually sound and — what is just as important, given our present circumstances — also likely to lead to productive class work, as examples of purposeful, effective talk now being produced by a whole number of schools will testify.

The real need is to enrich the deliberately simplified view of the oral modes that was proposed in the second chapter and to do this by bringing to it an understanding both of its limitations and of the general context of curricular activity within which its development may occur. If the Talk syllabus does become basically a matter of directing the pupil's efforts to apply skills to situations, we must also ensure that our general English syllabus has developed within him the underlying strength and morale necessary to cope with these and any other specific demands he may be called upon to meet. Purposes will have to be defined, tasks presented and criteria established. But this directed work will always take place against a background of wider or lesser experience so that the pupil's particular efforts will, or will not, derive sustenance from the kind of diet of talk and listening activity we have managed to give him throughout the syllabus as a whole.

The argument that, increasingly, we have found ourselves putting forward in these pages is that we must attend to the speaker as well as to his speech. Our teaching must tap the sources of oral power within the individual pupil so as to help him grow into an articulate, resourceful and independent maker and receiver of speech. Growth of this order can only spring from a completeness of experience that will be formed by the kind of day-to-day audiences we can offer to what he has to say, by the variety of opportunities we can create for him, and by the degree to which we can show that we value his speech, not just as work within the oral column of Munn and Dunning courses, but as an integral part of his whole classroom life.

We hope that the kind of structured teaching approach advocated in Chapter 2, exemplified in succeeding pages, will be adopted. But we also hope that this will be done within a syllabus in which every resource of the English course has been brought together so as to nourish the pupil's growth as listener and as speaker. Indeed, 'Syllabus' is probably too narrow a term to express the full extent of the kind of effort that we believe must now be made. What we are describing is not simply the extra provision of a number of formal items to be placed into the programme of work, but rather the individual pupil's perception of the place of his talk in his schooling as a whole. Here the attitudes, the opportunities, the values, the total language life of the English classroom, must be of a nature that will help him to grow in experience and in confidence. We must, in short, think not so much of a syllabus but of the **oral curriculum**, an involvement of the pupil in a frequency and diversity of Talking and Listening that will show to him that these activities are regarded, both by the English classroom and by the culture of the school, as every bit as vital to his maturity as an educated person, as is his proficiency in Reading and Writing.

APPENDIX A: THE GUIDELINES

English is one of the three central subjects, joining Maths and Science, that make up the first round of S3 and S4 Syllabus revisions advocated by the Munn and Dunning Committees of the mid 1970's, set up by the Secretary of State for Scotland to carry out an examination of the secondary school curriculum in the 14 to 16 year old age range.

Although these reports envisaged three tiers of assessment — 'Credit', 'General', and 'Foundation' — to encompass the whole ability range, it was Foundation courses that were the first to be introduced and then only on a 'feasibility' basis. However, this work became widely influential as the Government's **Framework for Decision** (SED, 1982) confirmed, with its detailed plans not only for a rapid acceptance of Foundation courses but also for an extension of their principles into the 'General' and 'Credit' bands (Secretary of State approval was given in Summer, 1983). It is therefore worth describing Munn and Dunning developments in English in some detail.

Development has proceeded by a partnership of pilot work located in selected schools with central Scottish Education Department monitoring plus promulgation.

The first 20 Pilot Schools, scattered throughout Scotland, we chosen in the late 1970's; Foundation level work in these schools was carried out, and discussed with the regularly visiting Inspectorate, who, partly as a result of the 'good practice' they had observed, wrote out first draft 'Guidelines'. A series of In-Service gatherings of all these schools was also held at intervals, the Guidelines were refined, schools were required to attempt to apply them to their work.

By early 1981, the Guidelines were ready for wider publication and a copy of the SED's **Syllabus and Assessment guidelines: English, Foundation level** was sent to every Scottish school. In the following summer the Regions were asked to nominate a second round of pilot schools with the result that in 1981/82 a further 40 'Second-line' Pilot Schools were at work attempting to apply the Guidelines to their own courses, at the appropriate level. Munn and Dunning Development Officers ('MDDO's') were seconded to support these schools in their efforts during the 1981/82 and 1982/83 Sessions. (It was also during this period that the Scottish Central Committee on English began the work on Talk and Listening which has now become **HearSay.**)

In 1982/83 practically all the remaining schools became 'Third-Line' pilot schools with the result that almost certainly some kind of Foundation Syllabus became established in every school ready for the formal Secretary of State's acceptance of the whole Munn and Dunning scheme.

Meanwhile, 1982/83 saw a start made to the structuring of 'General' and 'Credit' courses with the setting up of Joint Working Parties ('Joint' because it was made up of representation from the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum, whose interests are in the main with the curriculum and syllabus, and the Scottish Examination Board whose obvious central interest was in the assessment programme). These JWP's were charged with the task of working out proposals for the adaptation of the Foundation Guidelines to the other two levels. As the original Guidelines have been deliberately left in an outline state, emphasising general qualities of balance and range and structure, they could be made to serve as a framework for any general English school course — the major part of the JWP's effort therefore was in the working out of levels of work appropriate to each of the three Dunning strata and of the comparative relationship of one to the others (the 'interfaces'). The Guidelines have already established the essential criteria, and the problem was now to relate these criteria to the different grading levels, to identify 'Grade Related Criteria'.

The English JWP made their report in Spring 1983 with the result that its proposals for both a revised Guidelines and for assessment descriptions of all three Dunning courses were ready for general use by session 1983/84. It is this, the extended copy of the Guidelines published in May 1983, that has been used as a reference point in this document. A third, revised edition incorporating the profession's responses to that May publication, will, however, have appeared by the time that HearSay comes out. It is not anticipated that its revisions will substantially affect the argument or examples contained in this document.

APPENDIX B: TALK GRADE RELATED CRITERIA

Reproduced from the Guidelines, May 1983.

Grade Related Criteria : Listening

Applying to all purposes

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will show that he has attempted with some degree of success the main purposes of listening in relation to messages that will for the most part be readily accessible, related to personal interests and experience, dealing with concrete human relationships or containing clearly presented ideas. He will demonstrate a rudimentary understanding and appreciation of the message.	The candidate will show that he has achieved the main purposes of listening in relation to messages that will be accessible as a whole, mainly related to personal interests and experience, dealing with concrete human relationships or containing clearly presented ideas. He will demonstrate a moderate understanding and appreciation of the message.	The candidate will show that he has a confident and consistent command of main purposes of listening in relation to messages that go beyond what is immediately accessible or related to personal interests and experience some of which will feature unfamiliar, abstract ideas and complexity of structure and tone. He will demonstrate a firm grasp and sensitive appreciation of the message.

Purpose 1 : To gain overall impression, gist of a message.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will identify accurately the main concern(s) of the message.	The candidate will accurately identify or state in his own words the main concern(s) of the message.	The candidate will make a clear and concise statement of the main concerns of the message and, where appropriate, will show a clear perception of their inter-relationships.

Purpose 2 : To obtain particular information from a message.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will, during the process of listening, note and identify accurately items of information which are related to areas of the message that have been clearly defined. He will subsequently recall and identify one or two such items.	The candidate will, during the process of listening, note and subsequently state accurately items of information which are related to areas of the message that have been clearly defined. He will also recall and state one or two such items.	The candidate will during the process of listening, independently select from the message as a whole, note and subsequently state accurately items of information. He will also independently recall from the message as a whole and state several such items.

Purpose 3 : To grasp ideas or feelings implied in a message.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will draw an acceptable inference of fact and/or deduce from such features as register, tone of voice or pace of delivery, obvious attitudes/feelings and, where appropriate, relationships between speakers.	The candidate will draw an apt inference of fact and/or deduce from such features as register, tone of voice or pace of delivery, obvious attitudes/ feelings, and, where appropriate, relationships between speakers.	The candidate will draw an apt inference of fact and/or deduce from such features as register, tone of voice or pace of delivery, nuances of attitude/feeling, irony and, where appropriate, shifts in and developments of relationships between speakers. He will also be able to substantiate these by allusion to evidence in the message.

Purpose 4 : To evaluate the attitudes, assumptions and arguments expressed in a message.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will make a simple, intelligible comment on some clearly defined aspect of the point(s) of view expressed in the message, and will attempt to justify it primarily by reference to his own experience.	The candidate will make a simple, intelligible comment on some clearly defined aspect of the point(s) of view expressed in the message, and will attempt to justify it by reference to his own experience and knowledge.	The candidate will make a considered comment on some aspect of the point(s) of view expressed in the message, and will show some skill in justifying it by a degree of argument that makes reference to his own experience and knowledge and, where appropriate, to evidence in the message.

Purpose 5 : To appreciate the techniques used in a message.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will identify one obvious feature of artistic technique which contributes to some clearly defined effect.	The candidate will identify one feature of artistic technique and explain its effect.	The candidate will demonstrate his ability to analyse the message in terms of its structure and the effectiveness of artistic techniques in achieving the overall purpose.

Purpose 6 : To enjoy and obtain enrichment from a passage.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will make a bald statement about some aspect of the message that has affected him.	The candidate will attempt to develop a statement about those aspects of the message that have affected him.	The candidate will give a succinct and detailed account of what he has enjoyed in and/or gained from the message.

Grade Related Criteria : Talking

Applying to all purposes

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
In performance of tasks across the main purposes of talking, the candidate will be eventually intelligible, although he will need substantial listener support. He will show modest ability to vary pace and tone in support of meaning. Gap-filling, hesitancy and repetition will hinder communication. He will show rudimentary awareness of purpose, situation and audience.	In performance of tasks across the main purposes of talking, the candidate will be eventually intelligible, although he will need some listener support. He will show modest ability to vary pace and tone in support of meaning. Gap-filling, hesitancy and repetition will not hinder communication. He will show definite awareness of purpose, situation and audience.	In performance of tasks across the main purposes of talking, the candidate will be immediately intelligible with little or no listener support. He will show marked control of pace and intonation in support of meaning. Gap-filling, hesitancy and repetition will not hinder communication. He will show sensitive and sustained awareness of purpose, situation and audience.

Purpose 1 : To convey information

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will convey information in a fairly orderly sequence, with some sense of relevance.	The candidate will convey information in an orderly sequence with few digressions.	The candidate will select relevant information and highlight what is most significant.

Purpose 2 : To deploy ideas, expound, argue and evaluate

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will be able to express opinion and expound ideas in concrete personal terms.	The candidate will be able to order and present ideas and opinions with some measure of generalisation and objectivity.	The candidate will be able to marshal ideas and evidence in support of an argument: these ideas will have depth, complexity or sophistication, or some combination of these. He will show a capacity for objectivity, generalisation and evaluation.

Purpose 3 : To describe personal experience, express feelings and reactions

Applying to all purposes

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will communicate the gist of an experience: this will tend to be in the form either of a brief, vague or cliched statement or of a rambling narrative. Emotional reaction or attitude to experience as a whole will be stated or implied by the manner in which it is recounted.	The candidate will give a reasonably full or fairly specific account of an experience. He will show some capacity to select and sequence the main elements. Emotional reaction or attitude to experience as a whole will be stated or implied by the manner in which it is recounted.	The candidate will give a succinct and detailed account of an experience focussing on significant elements. He will describe the impact of experience with some degree of insight and self-awareness.

Talking

Purpose 4 : To create particular effects

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
To some extent the candidate will adapt language to audience and purpose. In story-telling he will set a scene and sustain a brief narrative which leads to a climax. In role play he will attempt to assume a character through style of speech and, where appropriate, actions.	The candidate will adapt language to audience and purpose. In story-telling he will set the scene and sustain the narrative to its climax, and will convey some sense of character. In role-playing he will assume a character through style of speech and, where appropriate, actions.	The candidate will effectively adapt language to audience and purpose. In story-telling he will achieve effects through creative use of structure, tone, timing and vocabulary. In role-playing he will sustain and develop a character through style of speech and, where appropriate, actions.

Purpose 5 : To work, in a group, towards a common goal

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will contribute to the discussion, and show signs of appreciating the points made by others.	The candidate will contribute to the discussion, and show signs of appreciating the points made by others. He will occasionally take an initiative.	The candidate will contribute purposefully to the discussion and will moderate his views in response to the statements and initiatives of others. He will show a capacity to take an initiative or pursue his own view; when in a chairing role, he will work to achieve consensus.

APPENDIX C

'A Ghost Story'

Once upon a time a bald man accepted a challenge to spend a night in a room that was said to be haunted. Earlier he had scoffed at his friends' superstitions, but now that he was actually alone in the room at midnight, he began to feel scared.

'Fool! make sure no one's planning a trick on you. check the whole place'.

First he fastened the burglar catches on the windows and secured the shutters. Then he jammed an old rug up the chimney. He tapped round the walls and the floor and ceiling to make sure there were no secret chambers. He looked into the cupboards, on top of the wardrobe, under the bed — not a trace of anything suspicious anywhere!

He felt much safer after that, but as a precaution he locked the door from the inside, stuffed the keyhole with paper, and backed the dressing table against the door. After he had undressed and put on his pyjamas, the last thing he did was to take off his fine black wig and place it on a chair at his bedside.

Once he was in bed, he sat up and finally surveyed the haunted room. All was well: it was just an ordinary room. He put the key under his pillow, switched off the bed-lamp and, pulling the bed clothes up around him, lay back in the darkness exhausted but happy.

This story is unfinished. Try to give it a short, eerie ending.

PUPIL DISCUSSION

Note: A transcript covering a larger part of the discussion than appears on the tape is included here.

TRANSCRIPT OF AN UNSUPERVISED GROUP DISCUSSION
6 P7 PUPILS (2G + 4B)

At this point the discussion has been running for 7 minutes.
Simon is acting as Chairman.

1.	Lindsay:	. . . as John says. It never says that he looked in the wardrobe, so the toads, as John says, could have been in the wardrobe. They've got out and . . .
2.	Tommy:	So it never said that, it never said, in the story, that his friends didnae know he was baldy. 'Cos if they were his friends, they were good friends, they would know everything about him.
3.	Lindsay:	Yea, that's what I've put.
4.	Tommy:	A' his secrets.
5.	John:	If they were good friends, they wouldn't be arguing about ghosts.
6.	Lindsay	'His friend knows that he is bald, and he will take his wig to try and embarrass the baldy man'. (Reads from what she has written.)
7.	John:	Would you argue about Clare about ghosts?
8.	Stuart:	Aye.
9.	Tommy:	The way you . . .
10.	Stuart:	Aye.
11.	Tommy:	. . . debate in class you argue, say wan of your best pals, say Simon or Paul Letters or something like that . . .
12.	John:	/None of them/
13.	Tommy:	You argue with them — a debate so — this is a sort of debate thing. You can argue, can't you?
14.	Stuart:	Yea.
15.	Simon:	Right, there's one thing here it says . . . it's in — don't tell me he's talking to himself or something? — it's inverted commas.
16.	Stuart:	It says, 'Fool' . . .
17.	Simon:	It wouldn't be inverted commas if he was thinking. It says, 'Fool, make sure no one's planning a trick on you. Check the whole place'.
18.	Stuart:	It says . . .
19.	Simon:	Is only one person there? one person there?
20.	Stuart:	He couldnae talk to himself.
21.	Lindsay:	True.

22. John: Perfect rubbish.
23. Stuart: He's scared, he's probably scared oot o' his wits: he could be speaking to himself.
24. John: He was thinking . . .
25. Linda: I don't think so.
26. John: He was thinking.
27. Simon: It wouldn't be in inverted commas, would it not?
28. Stuart: It could be, if he was thinking.
29. Linda: If he's talking to himself, it would . . . it would be in a thought or something. He wouldn't . . . he wouldn't speak it out loud unless he . . .
30. Stuart: Inverted commas . . .
31. Simon: Yea, but inverted commas is direct speech.
32. John: That's what's happened . . .
33. Stuart: But he only said it to himself.
34. John: . . . the same what Simon does when Ian Munro misses an open goal: he goes . . . Simon thinks to himself "What a fool! how could he've missed it?"
35. Simon: Right, Lindsay. We'll go round again. Do you think it's a ghost or a man tricking him?
36. Lindsay: A man tricking him.
37. Simon: (To Clare) What do you think?
38. Lindsay: Well, not a man tricking him, just something tricking him.
39. Simon: (To Clare) OK, what do you think?
40. Clare: I agree with John.
41. Simon: And what's that?
42. Clare: . . . about toads, these wee things.
43. Simon: Toads? Animals then? You go for animals . . . or a man?
44. Clare: Aye . . . mmm . . . mmm . . .
45. Simon: What do you go for?
46. Stuart: I just say it's sort of death-watch beetles or something, and they're under the floorboards tickling an' that.
47. Simon: I don't think it would be that intricate, Stuart. Could death-watch beetles . . . ?
48. Stuart: Yea, well it's an old hoose, in' it? an' that's a ghost place . . . it's supposed to be . . .
49. Simon: Tommy, what do you think?
50. Tommy: A think it's a . . . it's a ghost.
51. Simon: I agree with you, Tommy.
52. Clare: They could have a loft.
53. Tommy: It's not called a ghost . . . it's not called a ghost story for nothing.
54. Stuart: But he tapped all over the floor for . . .
55. /Babble/
56. John: . . . I've got a ghost book at home full of ghost stories and' all, but
57. Stuart: A . . . ah!
58. Simon: Yea, but it's an old . . .
59. John: . . . out of five ghost stories are only got anything about ghosts; the other ones have got some unnatural phenomenon.
60. Linda: John, there could be a loft. He never went up into the loft, did he?
61. John: Well, don't know, There might not 've been one.
62. : /The . . . man . . . doesn't tell you . . ./
63. Lindsay: Ah know, but there could have been.
64. John: He looked everywhere.
65. Simon: Look, it didn't tell you a lot of things. It didn't tell you what colour of pyjamas or anything.

66.	John:	There could be a million things . . .
67.	/Babble	. . . he could be . . . know the colour of pyjamas . . . /
68.	John:	. . . be bats . . . there could be bats . . . you get millions of them in old haunted rooms . . . and there'll obviously be millions of bats . . . be millions of frogs . . . be millions of mice . . .
69.	Stuart:	No millions.
70.	John:	. . .be millions of rats — there'd be everything.
71.	Stuart:	No millions.
72.	Lindsay:	Ah mean . . . ah mean, if it's an old house . . .
73.	Simon:	Nobody thinks it'll be a man now?
74.	Tommy:	You've never seen a rat son . . . you've never seen the size of wan. They're aboot that size (gesture).
75.	Lindsay:	I don't think rats could get through a wee sp.. a wee thing like that.
76.	John:	Bit they could have a rat hole.
77.	Tommy:	Toads are big enough: toads are about that size.
78.	Clare:	In behind the wardrobe.
79.	John:	But they could've . . .
80.		/Impossible . . . yes . . . his friends'll try to trick him . . . Babble/
81.	Clare:	. . . have a wee hole behind the wardrobe . . .
82.	Lindsay:	Behind the wardrobe as . . .
83.	Robert:	So . . .
84.	John:	He moved the wardrobe . . .
85.	:	/It could be . . . it could be the door he moved . . . chair behind it . . . Babble/
86.	Simon:	Right, I think . . . I think I agree with Stuart, Lindsay and Clare and John . . . it'll be an animal or something funny.
87.	Tommy:	Ah don't — get it — ah don't agree . . . and am no gonnae change. Ah don't agree, 'cos how could you get an animal in there?

Hereafter the discussion continues for another 8 minutes.

REFERENCES

This document does not pretend to be an authoritative work but rather a report by teachers to teachers. It has not been based on any reading that is comprehensive or specialised but rather upon classroom observation and discussion. This does not mean, however, that certain articles and books were not found to be useful, only that we are in no position to offer a bibliography on the subject. Instead we include a set of 'references' to indicate the works consulted and found to be helpful:-

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TAPE EXTRACTS

For use with C90 cassette tape made to accompany **HearSay,** David Northcroft and the Scottish Central Committee on English.

Introductory comments — Side A 1 min 45 sec

Tape Extract 1 (**HearSay** Chapter 2) — 5 min 5 sec

An S3 pupil following a 'Foundation' course in a Munn and Dunning Pilot School delivers a talk to his classmates on his personal hobby of rabbit-keeping.

Auchmuty High School, Fife.

Tape Extract 2 (Chapter 4) — (Running total appr. 6m 50s) 3 min 25 sec

An S3 pupil, again from a Pilot School (2nd line) offers two versions of a talk given as part of his 'Local Community' unit — the second is an improved attempt made after receiving his initial effort and taking advice from his teacher, Mrs. Methven, whose voice you will also hear in this Extract.

Portree High School, Skye.

Note: the school is in no way responsible for the indifferent quality of this recording.

Tape Extract 3 (Chapter 4) — (RT: 10m 15s) 4 min 5 sec

An S3 pupil practises telephone skills with his class teacher as part of his work in a 'Holiday' unit.

Harlaw Academy, Aberdeen.

Note: the surname and street number of the pupil concerned have been blanked out.

Tape Extract 4 (Chapter 4) — (RT: 14m 20s) 3 min 10 sec

Senior school pupils work with a teacher on a communication task (explaining driving route from street plan).

University of Stirling 'Language Skills' Project

Tape Extracts 5 and 6 (Chapter 4) — (RT: 17m 30s) 7 min 0 sec

P7 group involved in a group discussion in which they work out the likely ending to the first part of a ghost story. You will first hear them talk by themselves and then report on their findings to the teacher on his return.

St Fillans Primary School, Renfrew

Note: in each case only part of their talk is reproduced.

Tape Extract 7 (Chapter 4) — (RT: 24m 30s) 1 min 45 sec

Another S3 pupil from the same school, but a 'higher' certificate class, as featured in Tape Extract 1; he is delivering a talk to the rest of his class on 'Nuclear Warfare'.

Auchmuty High School, Fife.

Tape Extracts 8-11 (Chapter 4) — (RT: 26m 15s) 10 min 15 sec

A sequence of recordings produced by an S1 pupil, 'Jackie', (at the very end of her year) on the topic of her dog.

8 — Solo talk on 'Looking After a Dog', first attempt.
9 — A second 'improved version' of the above, produced after review and discussion with teacher and classmates.
10 — Impromptu 'open' talk on her dog, produced in less formal circumstances than above.
11 — Discussion with teacher and group of classmates, made as continuation of above talk.

Hilton Academy, Aberdeen.

Tape Extracts 12-14 (Chapter 4) — (RT: 36m 30s) To end of Side A

A set of recordings extracted from an intensive teaching cycle conducted by a class teacher with a pair of S3 boys following a 'Foundation' course in a 1st line Pilot School. The topic is 'interview' skills — we listen to the boys being taken through a formative assessment learning sequence:

12 — 'Before the Interview' — a preparatory discussion, with their teacher, of the skills needed to make an effective person to person interview of the informal kind heard on 'chat' shows.
13 — 'Interview' and 'Review' — a first attempt, 'Draft 1', followed by an evaluative review again with the teacher.
14 — 'Interview 2' — a second attempt, 'Draft 2', in which effort is made to apply the 'lessons' learned above.

Our Lady's High School, Motherwell.

Tape Extract 15 (Chapter 5) **Side B 55 sec**

Two different pupils attempting the same task: to relay a telephone message, from one person to another, orally.

Berwickshire High School, Duns.

Tape Extract 16 (Chapter 5) 4 min 25 sec

An S3 pupil following a 'Foundation' style course in two different oral tasks : first discussing his class reader **Kes** (Barry Hines) with his teacher; then we hear him delivering a talk on his local area in the role of a courier to a coach load of tourists (simulated).

Berwickshire High School, Duns.

Tape Extract 17 (Chapter 5) (RT. 5m 20s) 3 min 15 sec

An S3 girl being informally interviewed on her hobby of sport by her class teacher.

Berwickshire High School, Duns

Tape Extract 18 (Chapter 6) (RT: 8m 35s) 5 min 20 sec

A Listening Test in the style of an 'aural comprehension' and using a reading of a passage on Scott of the Antarctic.

Tape Extract 19 (Chapter 6) (RT: 13m 55s) 3 min 35 sec

Taped extract from an interview between Stephen Young, Editor of 'The Northern Scot' and Brian Johnston, presenter of Radio 4 programme 'Down your Way' (Visiting Elgin, Morayshire, June 1982)

BBC

Tape Extracts 20, 21 (Chapter 7) (RT: 17m 30s) 8 min 40 sec

A group of S3 pupils practising and then assessing their group discussion skills.

20 — a brief extract from their discussion of 'Teenagers' carried out according to a teacher-given worksheet and with a group chairman appointed.
21 — another short extract in which we hear them assessing their own performance, using a set 'evaluation sheet'.

Westhill Academy, Grampian.

Tape Extract 22 (Chapter 8) (RT: 21m 10s) 3 min 10 sec

Teacher and S4 'Foundation' group discuss an incident taken from their classreader **Kes** (Barry Hines). Extracts only given.

Preston Lodge, East Lothian.

Extracts Tape Extract 23 (Chapter 8) (RT: 24m 20s) 3 min 50 sec

a) S3 pupil interviewing an old fisher wife on her memories of pre-war work at the fish in Aberdeen — part of a local community unit.
b) Another pupil from the same class delivering a dramatised monologue.

Linksfield Academy, Aberdeen

Tape Extract 24 (Chapter 8) (RT: 33m 10s) 8 min 50 sec

Three brief readings grouped round the normal class activities of one S2 pupil 'Robin' in a school where a great deal of emphasis is laid on oral work. Only short extracts from very substantial work are offered here.

a) Interview with a teacher on 'animals'.
b) Pupil group discussion of poem 'Arithmetic' (Gavin Ewart).
c) Role play with classmate taking part in simulated Silver Jubilee anniversary interview in 'Love and Marriage' unit.

Westhill Academy, Grampian.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Even the most cursory glimpse of its content will show that **HearSay** could not have been begun let alone completed without the most generous and willing help of many individuals, schools, English departments and pupils, who sent tapes, received visits, offered and listened to comments and offered general encouragement. We have tried to make this list as complete as we can but even its extent will give only the merest indication of our dependence upon others in compiling this document. It should also be added that while our intention has been to use schoolwork only in order to supply examples of good practice, it is very much to be hoped that what is included here will testify to the excellent pioneering work that has been going on in all the places listed below.

Aberdeen College of Education

Achtercairn, Gairloch, Highland

Auchmuty High School, Glenrothes, Fife

Banff Academy, Grampian

Bankhead Academy, Aberdeen, Grampian

Berwickshire High School, Duns, Borders

Elgin High School, Grampian

Glenwood Secondary, Glasgow, Strathclyde

Harlaw Academy, Aberdeen, Grampian

Hilton Academy, Aberdeen, Grampian

Kinross High School, Tayside

Linksfield Academy, Aberdeen, Grampian

Mearns Academy, Laurencekirk, Grampian

Milne's High School, Fochabers, Grampian

Mintlaw Academy, Grampian

Nairn Academy, Highland

Our Lady's High School, Motherwell, Strathclyde

Preston Lodge, East Lothian

Portree High School, Isle of Skye, Highland

St Fillans Primary School, Houston, Renfrew

St Modan's High School, Stirling, Central

St Saviour's Academy, Dundee, Tayside

Trinity High School, Paisley, Strathclyde

University of Stirling

Westhill Academy, Grampian

and

Mr Anthony Smith and Mr Stephen Young for permission to use an extract from **Down your Way**.